Commentary

Volume Sixty-six, Number One, July 1978

IS PEACE STILL POSSIBLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

Robert W. Tucker
Walter Laqueur
Bernard Lewis
Steven J. Rosen

The Paper Route—A Story
John Krich

Rx for the Novel
Joseph Epstein

Stravinsky's Stature
Samuel Lipman

Books in Review:
Michael Novak
Peter Skerry
A. J. Sherman
Melvin Croan
Bernard K. Johnpoll
Dan Jacobson

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE / $2.50

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a in Israel

Th[illegible] orang[illegible] with just a hint of fine chocolate.

Sabr[illegible] queur

IMPORTED BY [illegible], 375 PARK AVENUE, N. Y. C. 52 PROOF

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Wouldn't you like to see your husband reach for a second cup?

Then change to rich Yuban®
-for richness worth a second cup.

I did. It used to bother me when my husband kept turning down a second cup. Because I'm too good a wife not to care about good coffee. So I changed to Yuban. It's extra rich taste comes from extra rich beans—like sun ripened beans from Colombia, some of the world's richest coffee beans. That's Yuban—for richness worth a second cup.

Yuban®
The Simcha Coffee

CERTIFIED KOSHER

The premium coffee of General Foods

GF
GENERAL FOODS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Commentary

VOLUME 66 NUMBER 1 *JULY 1978*

Articles 17 Is Peace Still Possible in the Middle East?

17 The Role of the United States *Robert W. Tucker*

29 The View from Tel Aviv *Walter Laqueur*

37 The Egyptian Perspective *Bernard Lewis*

46 A Skeptical View *Steven J. Rosen*

Story 53 The Paper Route *John Krich*

Observations 57 Rx for the Novel *Joseph Epstein*

Music 61 Stravinsky's Stature *Samuel Lipman*

Letters 4 from *Malcolm J. Sherman, Robert A. Licht, William R. Havender, Henry Greber, Joseph Adelson, Herbert Loebel, Milt Groban, David S. Wyman, Diana Dodge, Henry Jacoby, Stephen Miller, Lawrence Kaplan,* and others

Books in Review 68 Two Cheers for Capitalism, by Irving Kristol *Michael Novak*

70 Abortion in America, by James C. Mohr; The Ambivalence of Abortion, by Linda Bird Francke *Peter Skerry*

72 The Guggenheims, by John H. Davis *A.J. Sherman*

74 Inside East Germany, by Jonathan Steele *Melvin Croan*

76 While Messiah Tarried, by Nora Levin *Bernard K. Johnpoll*

78 Final Entries 1945: The Diaries of Joseph Goebbels, edited by Hugh Trevor-Roper *Dan Jacobson*

Editor: Norman Podhoretz
Executive Editor: Neal Kozodoy
Managing Editor: Marion Magid
Associate Editor: Brenda Brown
Contributing Editors: Robert Alter, Milton Himmelfarb, Walter Laqueur
Comptroller: Philip Shamis
Production Manager: Bruce Lodi
Circulation Manager: Helene Hansen
Cover: The Drawing Board, Inc.

COMMENTARY is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee—Single copy is $2.50, $24 a year; 3 years $64; 5 years $96—Add $4.00 per year for all foreign, including Canada and Latin America—Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices. Copyright © 1978 by the American Jewish Committee; all rights reserved under International and Pan American Copyright Conventions—Indexed in *Readers' Guide, Book Review Digest, Public Affairs Information Service, Index to Jewish Periodicals, ABC Pol Sci, Historical Abstracts,* and *America: History and Life*—Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

EDITORIAL & BUSINESS OFFICES: 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Who's a leader at fueling America to keep it running strong?

Amoco is...

with over a million barrels of its petroleum products used by Americans every day.

Much of our business is done through our independent dealers' and jobbers' service stations, under the familiar red, white and blue Torch and Oval emblem.

These dealers and jobbers sell our fine family of Amoco gasolines—our leaded regular, and our two grades of lead-free. Plus, a full line of Amoco® motor oils.

Amoco markets directly or through jobbers, to homes, industry, farms. We offer railroad fuels and jet fuels, lubricants, heating oils, LP-gas, fertilizers and pesticides. We also market to municipalities and governments.

What all our activity adds up to is this: every one of these millions of barrels of Amoco petroleum products used annually helps keep America running strong.

You expect more from a leader.

AMOCO®

Amoco Oil Company

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Statement of Aims

In sponsoring COMMENTARY, the American Jewish Committee aims to meet the need for a journal of significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues. Its pages will be hospitable to diverse points of view and belief, and it hopes to encourage original creative endeavor in the various fields of culture. The opinions and views expressed by COMMENTARY's contributors and editors are their own, and do not necessarily express the Committee's viewpoint or position. The sponsorship of COMMENTARY by the Committee is in line with its general program to enlighten and clarify public opinion on problems of Jewish concern, to fight bigotry and protect human rights, and to promote Jewish cultural interest and creative achievement in America.

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Richard Maass, *President*

The Commentary Publication Committee

Edward E. Elson, *Chairman*

Norman Alexander
Donald M. Blinken
Charles D. Breitel
Naomi W. Cohen
Theodore Ellenoff
Richard C. Ernst
Edith U. Fierst
Maurice Glinert
Robert H. Haines
Lewis J. Laventhol
Bess Myerson
Ned Pines
Frederick P. Rose
David Sher
John Slawson
Harry Steiner
Alan M. Stroock*
Laurence A. Tisch
Ben Touster
Gerard Weinstock

**Honorary Member*

Letters from Readers

Quotas

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Available data on the scholastic performance of minority beneficiaries of preferential-admissions programs largely confirm Joseph Adelson's analysis ["Living with Quotas," May], though not in every detail. Minority professional students would appear on the whole to be even more dependent on quotas than he suspects.

One of the rare contexts for which reliable quantitative data exist is law schools. The Educational Testing Service (ETS) of Princeton, New Jersey, whose Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) is required of virtually all law-school applicants, made an extensive survey of 1976 entering law students and polled the nation's law deans about admissions policies. The deans estimated that 80 per cent of their black law students would not have been admitted in open competition with whites. Of course, blacks are encouraged to apply to schools that would summarily reject similarly qualified whites, and minority members not normally admissible at the best schools would have been admitted elsewhere in open competition. Nevertheless, black enrollments would drop sharply, perhaps by 50 or 60 per cent, in the absence of preference. The proponents of preferential quotas are correct in claiming that recent increases in minority enrollments are substantially dependent upon these policies, though Mr. Adelson appears to have doubts about this.

According to the ETS study, 20 per cent of white law applicants, 4 per cent of Chicano applicants, and only 2 per cent of black applicants had LSAT scores above 600 and undergraduate grade-point averages above 3.25 on a four-point scale. (Three B's and one A produce a 3.25 average.) In order to have a realistic chance of being admitted to one of the nation's best law schools, a white student would need to score near 700 (the top 3 per cent) on the LSAT and to have an undergraduate average around 3.5. At several of the nation's most competitive schools, fewer than half of all white applicants with these credentials were accepted. A nationwide total of 4,122 white students scored above 700 on the LSAT in 1976, but only *seven* black students did so. Thus, in the nation's top dozen law schools, an average of at best one-half of one black student per entering class had credentials equal to or better than those of a typical student.

Proponents of special admissions, while conceding that most minority students are initially less qualified than whites, argue that many minority students are intrinsically abler than their credentials would suggest, and will ultimately outperform apparently better qualified whites. Grades and test scores, according to this argument, will underpredict subsequent minority performance in the same way that a track coach who relied only on current performance would underestimate the potential of a prospect whose training had been inadequate. But many recent studies have shown that grades and test scores are actually biased in favor of blacks in that blacks with given credentials will, on the average, receive somewhat *lower* subsequent grades than would whites with the same prior grades and scores. This was true at every law school studied in 1972 by William B. Schrader and Barbara Pitcher and in a 1974 study by Schrader (both studies were published by the Law School Admission Council). The same pattern was observed for undergraduate grades at eighteen out of twenty-two colleges in a 1973 survey by Robert Linn. Similar data have been reported in industry and in the military.

Thus, not only do black law students typically enter with markedly worse credentials than whites, but black students, on the average, get *lower* law-school grades than would white students whose prior grades and test scores matched those of the blacks. The magnitude of this gap (about one-third of a standard deviation) is too small to be significant for a single individual, but requires explanation when observed as a group phenomenon. To illustrate this point further: there is almost no practical difference between an IQ of 120 and an IQ of 125 (five points being a third of a standard deviation on the scale of IQ scores). But a five-point drop in the average IQ of an entire school would justifiably be regarded as serious. The nationwide drop in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

An Appeal for the Indochinese Refugees

The plight of the Indochinese refugees requires immediate, compassionate action by the United States.

One hundred thousand refugees from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia are today in camps in Thailand, awaiting resettlement. Thousands more are scattered in refugee camps throughout Southeast Asia. All lead a precarious existence, and thousands are in constant danger of being forcibly returned to their countries of origin where they would face severe punishment and possible death. Large numbers of Vietnamese boat people have drowned in the Gulf of Siam and the South China Sea—yet passing ships continue to deny rescue to refugee boats that are in distress, and many Southeast Asian ports refuse to let them land. Still, an estimated 1,500 boat people continue to escape every month from Vietnam. Similarly, while Laotians are no longer accepted in Thailand as refugees—instead they are imprisoned or sent to detention camps or forcibly repatriated—, some 2,000 to 3,000 continue to enter Thailand every month.

The extraordinary risks which these refugees take in fleeing, the suffering they endure, and the rejection which they know awaits them attest to their desperation. Having escaped from totalitarian societies where life had become intolerable, they now look to the democratic countries of the world—and to the United States above all—for compassion and generosity. It is in this spirit that we should respond.

A Citizens' Commission of Indochinese Refugees, organized by the International Rescue Committee, recently returned from a visit to the refugee camps in Southeast Asia. The Commission, composed of 12 leading Americans, called upon the United States to adopt a long-range, open-ended policy according to which the present strict limitations on the number of refugees that are being admitted would be lifted and the process of admission speeded up.

The Citizens' Commission made a series of specific recommendations which we feel should be the basis for a new United States policy regarding the refugees from Indochina. The recommendations call for:

1. The adoption of a coherent and generous policy for the admission of Indochinese refugees over the the long range, replacing the current practice of reacting belatedly to successive refugee crises. Such a policy should encourage other countries already participating in the resettlement endeavor to continue their work, and it should also stimulate new countries to join the common endeavor to grant sanctuary. In addition, the firm knowledge that the refugees would be guaranteed a final home would encourage Southeast Asian countries to grant them temporary asylum.

2. A readiness to provide generous financial, technical and other assistance to Southeast Asian countries for the purpose of permanently resettling some refugees in these countries.

3. The elimination of all existing criteria for admission into the U.S. of the most desperate refugee cases, specifically the boat people from Vietnam, Vietnamese who have come to Thailand overland, and Cambodian refugees. Our government should make clear its firm intention that permanent resettlement for these refugees will in all instances be assured.

4. A more flexible and compassionate application of immigration criteria to Laotian refugees, who comprise a majority of all the refugee cases.

5. The dropping of the distinction between "economic" and "political" refugees, a distinction that is sometimes used to relieve those who would normally assist political refugees from feeling any obligation toward those who have fled. The use of the "economic" classification has even, in violation of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, served as a justification for the forcible repatriation of refugees in some instances.

6. An appeal to all maritime countries to let no ship pass people in danger of drowning, to close no ports to them, and to let no ship be penalized for bringing refugees to port.

The adoption of the refugee policy outlined above would be a concrete demonstration by our government of its concern for human rights. It would also be in our country's finest democratic tradition. We urge our government to take prompt action which would not only relieve the suffering of many thousands of homeless people, but would also in many cases save their lives.

Sponsored by

Social Democrats, USA

A. Philip Randolph — Honorary Chairman
Bayard Rustin — National Chairman
Carl Gershman — Executive Director

The following individuals, representing a broad range of political points of view, wish to join in supporting this appeal for the Indochinese refugees.

Shelley Appleton, Secretary-Treasurer, ILGWU
Roger Baldwin, Honorary President, International League for Human Rights
Murray Baron, President, Accuracy in Media
Arnold Beichman, Associate Professor, University of Massachusetts
Kenneth T. Blaylock, President, American Federation of Government Employees
Thomas R. Brooks, Author and President, League for Industrial Democracy
Kriseen A. Brown, Executive Director, Youth Institute for Peace in the Middle East
Sol C. Chaikin, President, International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union
Leo Cherne, Honorary Chairman, Freedom House
Jacob Clayman, President, Secretary-Treasurer, Industrial Union Dept. AFL-CIO
Joan Colebrook, Journalist
Wilbur Daniels, Executive Vice President, ILGWU
A. Roy Eckardt, Professor of Religion Studies, Lehigh University
Stanley Elkins, Professor of History, Smith College
James T. Farrell, Author
Leonard Garment, Attorney
Harry D. Gideonse, Chancellor Emeritus, The New School for Social Research
Robert Wallace Gilmore, President, New York Friends Group, Inc.
Nathan Glazer, Professor of Education and Sociology, Harvard University
Jerry Goodman, President, National Conference on Soviet Jewry
Frances R. Grant, Secretary General, Inter-American Association for Democracy and Freedom
A.F. Grospiron, President, Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers International Union
Matthew Guinan, President, Transport Workers Union of America
Donald Szantho Harrington, Senior Minister, The Community Church
Nat Hentoff, Writer
Rev. Mngr. George G. Higgins, Secretary for Research, U.S. Catholic Conference
Norman Hill, Executive Director, A. Philip Randolph Institute
Milton Himmelfarb, Editor, American Jewish Year Book
Sidney Hook, Senior Research Fellow, Hoover Institution, and Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, New York University
Irving Louis Horowitz, Professor of Sociology and Political Science, Rutgers University
Harold R. Isaacs, Professor Emeritus, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Tom Kahn, Assistant to the President, AFL-CIO
Lane Kirkland, Secretary-Treasurer, AFL-CIO
Jeane Jordon Kirkpatrick, Resident Scholar, American Enterprise Institute
Myron Kolatch, Executive Director, The New Leader
Milton R. Konvitz, Professor Emeritus, Cornell University
William Korey, Director, B'Nai B'rith, International Council
Jerzy Kosinski, Novelist and Past President, American PEN
Theodore Jacquenay, Associate Editor, Worldview
Jeri Laber, Executive Director, International Freedom to Publish Committee of the Association of American Publishers
Esther R. Landa, President, National Council of Jewish Women
Abba P. Lerner, Professor of Economics, Florida State University
Aaron Levenstein, Professor of Management, City University of New York
Sidney Lichtzky, Director, Division of International Organizations, American Jewish Committee
Edward N. Luttwak, Adjunct Professor of International Politics, Johns Hopkins University
Eugene Lynch, Executive Director, Frontlash
Suzanne Massie, Author
Lloyd McBride, President, United Steelworkers of America
John H. Michener, Director, Fund for an OPEN Society
Joyce D. Miller, President, Coalition of Labor Union Women
Hans J. Morgenthau, Professor, New School for Social Research
Senator Daniel P. Moynihan, Democrat of New York
Emanuel Muravchik, Executive Director, Jewish Labor Committee
Joshua Muravchick, Executive Director, Coalition for a Democratic Majority
Michael Novak, Ledder-Watson Professor of Religion, Syracuse University
Frederick O'Neal, President, Associated Actors and Artistes of America
William Phillips, Editor, Partisan Review, and Professor of English, Rutgers University
Norman Podhoretz, Editor, Commentary
Arch Puddington, Executive Director, League for Industrial Democracy
Lucian W. Pye, Professor of Political Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Dorothy Rabinowitz, Writer
Austin Ranney, Resident Scholar, American Enterprise Institute
Saunders Redding, Professor, American Studies & Humane Letters Emeritus, Cornell University
John Richardson, Jr., President, Freedom House
John P. Roche, Dean, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy
Eugene V. Rostow, Professor of Law, Yale University
I. Milton Sacks, Morris Hillquit Professor of Labor and Social Thought, Brandeis University
Meyer Schapiro, Professor, Columbia University
Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Writer
Jacob Sheinkman, Secretary-Treasurer, Amalgamated Clothing & Textile Workers Union
Donald W. Shriver, Jr., President, Union Theological Seminary
Paul Seabury, Professor of Political Science, University of California at Berkeley
Albert Shanker, President, American Federation of Teachers
Leon Shull, National Director, Americans for Democratic Action
Ambassador Laurence Silberman, Senior Fellow, American Enterprise Institute
Stephen Solarz, Member, House of Representatives from New York
William Stern, Executive Director, Workmen's Circle
Leonard R. Sussman, Executive Director, Freedom House
Miro Todorovich, Professor, Brooklyn College of the City University of New York
Frank N. Trager, Professor of International Affairs, New York University
Diana Trilling, Writer
Robert W. Tucker, Professor, Johns Hopkins University
J.C. Turner, General President, International Union of Operating Engineers
Martin J. Ward, President, United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry
Ben J. Wattenberg, Senior Fellow, American Enterprise Institute
Eugene P. Wigner, Professor of Physics, Princeton University
Aaron Wildavsky, President, Russell Sage Foundation
William W. Winpisinger, President, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers
Morley Winograd, Chairman, Michigan Democratic Party
E.R. Zumwalt, Jr., Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired)

(Titles listed for identification - partial list)

Social Democrats, USA 275 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001 (212) 255-1390

☐ Enclosed is my contribution of $_____ to assist in the further circulation of this statement and in organization of future activities in support of the Indochinese refugees.

☐ Please send me _____ copies of this statement so that I may circulate it to others.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please make checks payable to Social Democrats, USA.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

high-school mathematics scores over the last fifteen years has been the subject of great concern. Yet the magnitude of this drop is about a third of a standard deviation. . . .

Mr. Adelson cites public statements that seek to justify preference by pointing to purported successes in producing well-qualified graduates. The more sincere argument, rarely advanced in public, is that preferential quotas are necessary precisely because blacks on the average cannot meet competitive standards. A *Bakke* brief filed on behalf of the deans of California's four public law schools argues candidly that no color-blind procedure, such as giving preference to the poor, could suffice to maintain minority enrollments, because, as Mr. Adelson also notes, a majority of the poor are not minority members, and a majority of admitted minority students have not come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. . . .

Arguments that quotas are needed because we are all racists and because blacks are losing ground anyway are commoner than appeals to continue "successful" policies. Both kinds of claims are dishonest. The touted success is numerical and misleading. It is conceivable that minorities would be better off in the long run if they experienced a greater need to make their way through individual effort. Quotas give black progress, much of which is genuine, a spurious quality ("charity and payoffs," in the words of Thomas Sowell). Quotas, as Mr. Adelson effectively demonstrates, undercut the integrity and self-confidence of institutions that supinely bear the blame for discrimination not practiced. Quotas are undemocratic and violate individual rights, and their legitimation would undermine the fundamental ethical and constitutional foundations of the civil-rights movement. But quotas do increase the number of minority professionals faster than any alternative method. Those of us who oppose quotas ought to admit this, while those who favor quotas ought to be aware of the magnitude of the current gap between the skills of admitted minority students and those of rejected whites and of the startling failure of disproportionate numbers of blacks to work up to their demonstrated capacities.

MALCOLM J. SHERMAN
Russell Sage Foundation
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Joseph Adelson's article shows quite well the moral and psychological dilemmas of those in the universities who are forced to live with the "doubleness," self-deception, and "loss of dignity and self-esteem" that are the consequences of the quota system. . . . The phenomenon of quotas is now pervasive in both public and private employment. In addition to the catalogue of psychological effects that Mr. Adelson has observed in the universities, it is necessary to add the resentment and cynicism in the general population. These will have more severe political consequences than the situation in the universities. . . . In the public sector, it is now a common occurrence for a position to be advertised publicly which, in theory, is open to all qualified applicants, but which, in fact, has been privately designated for an "ethnic female," for example. This situation is especially prevalent in public-school systems and elsewhere where there is pressure to bring the percentages of minorities represented up to some "goal," . . . and it is a widely known fact of life for job applicants. . . . Before the civil-service reforms, an applicant for a position had to reveal some party loyalty. Now civil-service applications ask whether the applicant claims some ethnic or minority preference. There is a serious question as to which kind of discrimination is preferable. . . .

The rock upon which affirmative action and all its consequences, psychological, social, and political, is founded—or founders—is the question of justice. As Mr. Adelson's examples show, . . . with only rare exceptions, affirmative-action programs, in order to be implemented, require an act of injustice against . . . at least two persons, the one who is arbitrarily "affirmed" and the one arbitrarily denied. Moreover, affirmative action requires that this injustice be perpetrated bureaucratically so that anonymous individuals, acting as administrators, further the social "goals" envisioned by the legislation. Their actions are justified because, quite literally, they are simply doing their "job," i.e., "following orders." . . . But a desirable social goal should not require individual citizens to suffer injustice and, more importantly, should not place . . .others in the position of enforcing such injustice.

Both busing to achieve racial balance in the schools and affirmative action to right historic wrongs, are widely perceived as manifestly coercive and unfair. It is entirely conceivable that the distrust of government and the resentment and cynicism which these programs breed will have worse consequences for our political life than the evils they were designed to cure.

ROBERT A. LICHT
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Joseph Adelson need make no exception of the elite schools in his discussion of affirmative action in the universities, since the situation in at least one of them, Harvard Medical School, is similar to the one he describes at Michigan. One finds on the part of the administration and many faculty at Harvard Medical School the same curious attitude Mr. Adelson notes: much less concern with the true academic performances of "affirmatively"-admitted students than with preventing anyone from looking too closely at them. Specifically, there is the same administrative secretiveness concerning the academic records of these students . . .; the same pressures to contain thoughtful criticism "within the family," and then ignore it; the same "duality" . . . between publicly and privately expressed opinions; the same hostility directed at those rare and valorous souls who "blow the whistle" by means of unevasive public statements; and the same stream of artfully indistinct public reassurances by administration spokesmen.

This veiling of the relevant facts makes it difficult to carry on a sensible public debate, and in particular makes one apprehensive about the adequacy and accuracy of the information supplied to the Supreme Court in the *Bakke* case. Archibald Cox innocently depicted this as simply a question of whether universities "may" take race into consideration, as though the racial quota at Davis were of a kind with the other non-academic factors (geographic balance, etc.) sometimes taken into account. It clearly is not; the salient distinction is that such factors were never permitted to obscure the primary requirement of demonstrated aptitude and ability in the way that race, as Mr. Adelson relates, has been allowed to do at Davis.

None of this in any way diminishes the continued need to im-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

prove our means of detecting and encouraging academic merit among minorities. But if we come to regard the attainment and demonstration of competence as a lightly dispensable detail in seeking to realize this very desirable goal, we run a real risk of *intensifying* invidious group stereotypes precisely by means of these efforts to abate them. And a not insignificant cognate cost will be the loss of integrity of our most distinguished academic institutions.

WILLIAM R. HAVENDER
Berkeley, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . In my view, the economic aspect . . . is the most important part of the problem Joseph Adelson discusses in his article. As I see it, the *Bakke* case and similar cases have nothing to do with race or with discrimination, but have everything to do with the shortage of medical schools. Mr. Bakke and his minority and disadvantaged fellow students are all entitled to study medicine, if they so desire. The problem is not the artificial allocation of scarce places in medical schools, but the shortage of medical schools. The reason for this shortage is all too obvious: it insures the lucrativeness of the medical profession by holding down the number of physicians.

The solution to the problem is astonishingly simple: build more medical schools. Money spent for this purpose would bring the greatest possible return to the nation, by lowering the national health bill; this would in turn contribute to the reduction of inflation.

HENRY GREBER
New York City

JOSEPH ADELSON writes:

I cannot agree with Henry Greber that economic factors are the key to the *Bakke* case, or that quotas are a response to a shortage of places in professional schools. If that were so, we would not find the quota system flourishing in fields like law, where there is an abundance of places. There is, almost by definition, a shortage of places in elite law schools, which as a result recruit some of the most gifted students in the country; and there is also a shortage in the pool of minority talent, as Malcolm J. Sherman's letter makes clear. It is the collision of these realities which the proponents of affirmative action simply refuse to acknowledge or act upon; hence it is insisted that all schools take their "fair share" of minority students, regardless of their qualifications, and regardless of the consequences, to the students or to the schools.

Some of these consequences are mentioned in William R. Havender's letter, which I welcome since it allows me to call attention to the excellent article he wrote on the Orwellian atmosphere at Harvard Medical School these days (*American Spectator*, February 1978). It is sobering to see how quickly a great institution can be compromised when policy is governed by ideology and implemented by the self-righteous. Robert A. Licht's letter points to still other consequences: the bitterness and cynicism about quotas among the public at large, given their recognition that standards of fairness and equity are being violated. To judge by the letters and phone calls I have received, Mr. Licht is quite right in suggesting that the resentment is felt even more strongly outside the university than within.

I disagree with Mr. Sherman's letter on only one minor point, and I think I will stick to my guns on that, at least for the moment. I am not sure that quotas do increase the numbers of minority professionals, not substantially. One needs to look past the numbers enrolled to the numbers graduated and beyond that to the proportion who can pass the licensing examinations and establish themselves as professionals. I have not been able to find current data, but some of the figures from the recent past are not reassuring. In 1974, for example, the New York *Times* reported that fewer than 40 per cent of black law graduates passed the bar exam (the proportion for whites is about double that).

Yet I do not want to fasten on this point; what is far more important is that the triumphs of affirmative action, when represented only by larger numbers, will tend to be Pyrrhic victories if those numbers do not reflect adequate quality. Since my article appeared, comments made to me suggest that doubts about minority professional competence are now widespread and openly voiced. There seems to be no hesitation in saying that one would not choose a minority doctor or lawyer—as one friend put it to me, a bit owlishly, "not for anything serious." If that attitude were to become entrenched, we would have the most serious consequence of all. The era of affirmative action would leave as its legacy the belief that all minority professionals, including the most competent, are not to be trusted with anything "serious."

Bombing Auschwitz

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "Why Auschwitz Was Never Bombed" [May], David S. Wyman tells a story without including the main characters. His article explains how a policy was carried out, not how it was arrived at. One leaves the piece wondering why Mr. Wyman fails to mention President Roosevelt, except in passing.

AARON LERNER
Takoma Park, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

David S. Wyman's interesting and well-researched article on the hands-off attitude of the War Department regarding the bombing of Auschwitz may have missed a crucial point: aerial bombardment during World War II simply was not as accurate as civilians were led to believe by Air Force propaganda —pinpoint accuracy was achieved more by accident than by design. Therefore, it would have been extraordinarily difficult to destroy the gas chambers, located as they were so close to the people we were trying to save; nevertheless, it could have been done.

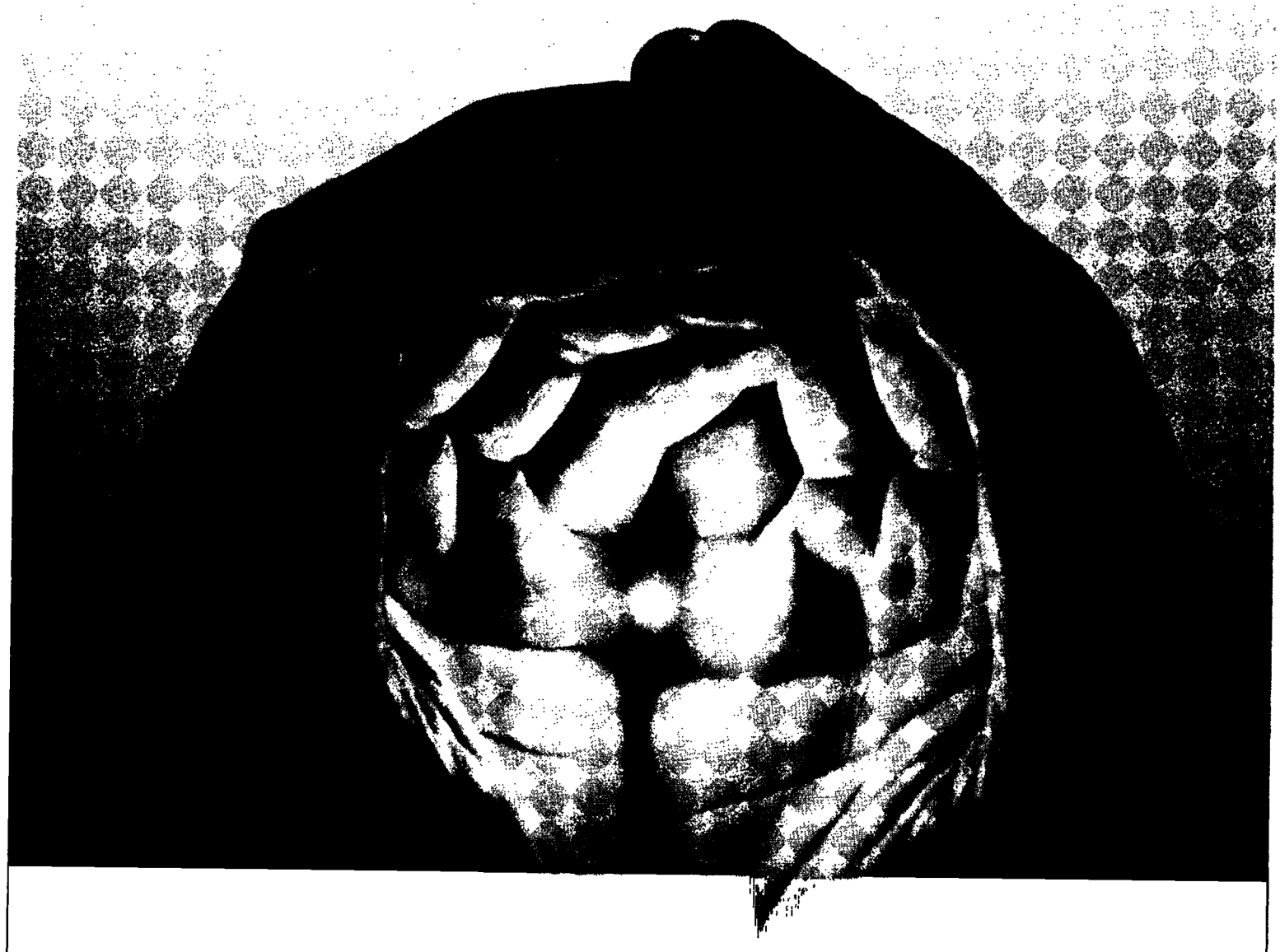
The aircraft most capable of success in a low-level attack needed for this type of mission was the British de Havilland Mosquito, which in fact carried out a similar undertaking, Operation Jericho, on February 18, 1944, when Mosquitoes raided the Amiens jail, enabling many French Resistance fighters awaiting execution to escape.

LAWRENCE H. BLUM
Beaumont, Texas

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

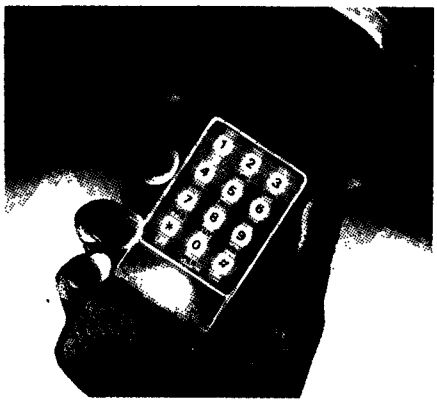
In 1944 I was an inmate of the so-called "Gypsy" camp at Auschwitz, which was located about 200 yards from the crematoria. During the first week of October 1944, the day after one of the crematoria had been sabotaged and all the inmates involved had been hunted down and killed by the SS, I heard intense anti-aircraft fire and instinctively sought cover. My first thought—and my hope, in spite of my proximity—was that Allied bombers had finally come to put an

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The longest lasting light under the sun.



Imagine a light bulb with a life expectancy of from 20 to over 100 years of continuous operation. One that ran on 1/10 the energy of a regular light bulb and virtually never needed replacement.

Light-Emitting Diodes

Such a light actually exists. It's called a light-emitting diode (LED) and in the last few years, these tiny lights have become an important part of your phone system.

Western Electric started manufacturing LED's in 1972. And since then, working with Bell Labs, we've discovered hundreds of new uses for them that have saved Bell telephone users millions of dollars.

Practical Applications

Take Western Electric's Trimline® telephones. To light the dial in our new models, we replaced the old incandescent bulbs with longer-lasting LED's. And since LED's may last up to 50 times longer, telephone companies' installation and maintenance costs have been reduced significantly.

Another way LED's save money is by saving energy. They consume about 1/10 the energy of incandescent bulbs.

And LED's can withstand the inevitable bumps and bruises that telephones always seem to receive.

LED's have also played a vital role in the development of new features and services in some of Western Electric's most sophisticated telephone equipment.

The Dimension® PBX console, for example, contains heat-sensitive solid-state equipment. A lot of these circuits could not stand up to the high temperatures of incandescent bulbs.

LED's, on the other hand, operate at temperatures low enough so as not to damage the nearby circuitry.

These advantages, along with long life, give product designers more flexibility. And that permits us to build more features and services into the equipment we produce for Bell System customers.

Continuing Innovation

Today, over 300 different types of Bell System equipment utilize LED's.

Innovations like this are the result of close collaboration between Western Electric, Bell Labs and your local Bell telephone company.

Working together to keep your phone system the best in the world.

Western Electric

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

end to this inferno. They didn't. That was thirty-four years ago. Today, thanks to David S. Wyman's excellent article, "Why Auschwitz Was Never Bombed," and my own research, I know that priorities to save Jewish lives were very low. There are, however, a few observations I would like to add to Mr. Wyman's article.

During World War II heavy fighter escort was essential to protect Allied bombers on daylight bombing missions. Night raids needed less, if any, protection, but remained inefficient because of poor target visibility. Here, Auschwitz was the exception. While all of Hitler's Europe hid from Allied bombers under a strict and ruthlessly enforced blackout, Auschwitz killing installations remained brightly lit, night after night, for the following reason: the fumes emanating from the crematoria chimneys reignited into a bright red fiery plume, each one about 75 feet long. These flames lit up the night sky and surrounding landscape and could be seen for miles.

The German military high command received continuous complaints from the German air-defense headquarters to stop these night cremations, because the fires could act as a navigational beacon for enemy bombers. Having seen the flames myself and having been a pilot, I would estimate that against a blacked-out landscape and from a height of 23,000 feet, on a clear night, Auschwitz must have been visible from a distance of at least 75 miles. Since many bombing raids were flown into this highly industrialized area, Allied pilots must have seen these fires. I believe it to be relevant to Mr. Wyman's article to investigate whether pilot reports and aerial photographs of this macabre period exist.

The killing installations were clustered in a relatively small area and were clearly visible at night, so that a few B-17's during a single night raid could, at best, have eliminated Auschwitz as a killing center. At worst, they could have prevented the Germans from using the "ovens" at night. This limitation alone would have saved many lives.

HERBERT LOEBEL
Sherman, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I flew as radar navigator-bombardier on the first Auschwitz raid from Fifteenth Air Force bases in Italy on August 20, 1944; as David S. Wyman notes in his article, we hit the refinery and the synthetic rubber plant in the factory areas of Auschwitz. It was the practice to brief bomber groups to steer clear of prisoner-of-war and concentration camps. During my combat tour, and in my later service as a staff operations officer at Fifteenth Air Force headquarters in Bari, Italy, in which I participated in the daily target-selection and operations planning, we continued to avoid injury to prisoners.

Mr. Wyman would have had us do otherwise. His disappointment in our failure to perform a prophylactic bombing of the concentration camp at Auschwitz is Kapo morality—kill some now to save some later. He should consider the following circumstances.

Accuracy. We really could not drop a bomb through a pickle barrel from 3,000 feet, as war-propaganda puffery and inter-service air-corps brag would have it. High-altitude precision bombing was a tactical ideal, which was only sometimes realized. In late 1944, up to 80 per cent of our bombing involved non-visual radar, which was less accurate than the not-too-precise optical bombing. Our accuracy was affected not only by the limited resolution of our radar, but also by haze; solid or broken undercast; smoke, either from German smoke generators or preceding bombing; turbulence; the variable skills of crews; equipment malfunction; flak; inaccurate calculations; unknown winds aloft; the tension of doing an exacting and precise job while being shot at; loose formation; and the myriad unforeseen complications affecting a large number of men operating complicated machinery under extreme circumstances.

To compensate, we frequently did carpet bombing. A common intervalometer setting, with 500-pound bombs, was 400 feet; this meant that bombs would be released sequentially so as to make a 400-foot spacing on the ground—thus, twelve bombs would make a string 4,800 feet long. A typical four-squadron group of fifty bombers would drop fifty of these approximately mile-long strings through a target. We usually hit something—frequently a bomb or two hit or damaged the target.

Mr. Wyman describes two crematoria of 340 feet and two approximately two-thirds that size. Could we have hit them? Probably. Could we have missed them? Not unlikely. The Fifteenth Air Force could lay on a maximum effort of a little over 1,000 bombers. Half of such an effort would result in 500 one-mile strings of bombs, for a total of 6,000 bombs exploding through the camp area. If we elected to salvo (drop the bombs all at once), there would be less likelihood of hitting the target, but greater damage to the target if hit, as well as to whatever was not the target, if hit.

Efficacy. The Nazis extinguished the lives of their helpless victims in many ways. In two days, September 29-30, 1941, in a ravine near Kiev, they machine-gunned and killed 33,000 Jews. The Nazis made do at Babi Yar without an elaborate infrastructure. Had the gas chambers and crematoria been damaged at Auschwitz, the Jews might have been killed differently, and who knows if the rate would have been slower? The resolute and determined killers could have bulldozed quicklime trenches, increased starvation, trained firing squads. Once you get the hang of it, a gas chamber is a simple structure—a tight building with convenient ports. If pressed, the Nazis could have boarded up a barracks, stuffed the cracks, and been back in business.

Diversion of Forces. Referring to my combat log, I find that in the ten days before the August 20 raid on Auschwitz I bombed: Ploesti, Rumania (August 10), the most important petroleum source of the Reich, a target bombed twenty-four times by the Fifteenth Air Force; St. Tropez beach (August 15), in connection with the invasion of Southern France—maximum effort, over 1,000 bombers, hitting the beaches just in advance of our debarking troops; Ploesti again (August 18). I do not have a log of all Fifteenth Air Force operations—we were on double crews so it is likely that other raids occurred in that time period.

Heavy bomber losses during this period were staggering. Flak intensity increased, aided by the German use of proximity fuses. Despite the defeat of the Luftwaffe, U.S. Air Force high command persisted in the brainless practice of daylight, high-altitude, formation bombing, thus presenting to German gunners a large, easily tracked target. The RAF heavy bombers, flying low-altitude individual sorties at night, equaled our accuracy and had less than half our attrition rate of 2.2 per cent. This rate, incidentally,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

meant that we lost 100 per cent of the Fifteenth Air Force in forty-five days of operations, a loss that was overcome only through massive infusions of new aircraft and crews. We husbanded our resources and selected targets carefully so as to deliver blows that would destroy Hitler's Germany and end the war. Official America has much to answer for in the heartless denial of its shores to refugees and in its treatment of our indigenous Japanese during World War II, but its refusal to "rescue" Jews by bombing them at Auschwitz is another matter.

Rail. According to my log, I was on a raid to Reccos marshaling yard, Budapest, June 27, 1944. This did not appear to affect the remarkable speed of the deportations of Jews from Hungary during that time. The bombing of marshaling yards and rail targets often had only a transient effect. In order to delay repair, we dropped mixed loads of time-delay bombs—24, 48, 72 hours. Persistent return to the target was required to block rail movements.

Mr. Wyman's "what if?" and "why didn't they?" speculations . . . induce a retrospective fantasy on my part. On August 20, 1944, as I train my sights on the refinery target at Auschwitz, I receive orders to alter course and bomb the camp. The Jews are huddled below, watching the innocent white vapor trails in the blue sky. I, a Jew, make corrections as the target moves into my bombing sight. My bomb-bay doors open; the planes purposively thundering behind me open theirs. My hand moves to the bomb release—I am the ultimate Kapo.

MILT GROBAN

Glencoe, Illinois

DAVID S. WYMAN writes:

Aaron Lerner raises the question of President Roosevelt's role in the failure to bomb Auschwitz. Despite a careful and extensive search for documentation concerning Roosevelt and the bombing issue, I found none. If FDR did participate in making the policy, it is surprising that this was not even alluded to in any of the many materials I researched. Further, if Roosevelt had ruled out such missions, it is strange that the Operations Division and the Air Force in Washington informed General Spaatz, concerning the October 1944 bombing request, that "this is entirely your affair." It is nonetheless possible that Roosevelt was involved, but any statement to that effect in my article would have been totally conjectural. If Mr. Lerner (or anyone else) has sources showing that FDR participated in setting the policy, I would very much like to be informed of them. Incidentally, I have no interest in deflecting criticism from Roosevelt. My forthcoming book about America's response to the Holocaust will show that his record concerning the rescue of Jews during World War II was a poor one.

In reply to Lawrence H. Blum: I did not assert that pinpoint bombing accuracy could be assumed. I did discuss in detail the obstacles in the way of accurate bombing, and argued that in the case of the gas-chamber side of the Auschwitz complex those obstacles certainly did not rule out a precision attack by heavy bombers. (As it happened, the August 20 raid took place when conditions were excellent for accurate bombing.) I also wrote that if a precision attack by heavy bombers had failed, other methods were available: saturation bombing from high altitudes, use of the more accurate medium bombers, or a mission by P-38 dive-bombers. By spring 1944, medium bombers had compiled excellent records in striking precision targets, including railroad bridges. As to P-38 dive-bombers, it seems to me undeniable that they could have hit the four large murder installations, and they could have done so with little or no injury to the prisoners in the nearby camp.

Mr. Blum is very likely correct that the British Mosquito would have been the best aircraft for the mission. The U.S. Air Force, of course, did not have Mosquitoes. But it did have P-38's, and they were capable of the assignment. Incidentally, requests for bombing the gas chambers and the deportation railways were also made of the British government, which, like the U.S. government, refused without giving any real consideration to the proposals.

Herbert Loebel's information concerning night fires marking the crematoria is most interesting. Because of that factor, it may be that a night attack would have been the most effective approach. The problem for aircraft striking Auschwitz in the daytime, however, was not the threat of German fighter planes. Nor would it have been difficult to locate the targets in daylight. As I pointed out in my article, the main potential problem at Auschwitz was flak. If daytime flak would, in actuality, have hampered aiming over the gas-chamber side of the complex (five miles from the industries), night flak would also have caused trouble in that regard, though perhaps less.

I doubt that the phenomenon of the flaming chimneys was known to the Air Force planners in Italy. I found no mention of them or any photographs in the archives. Except for one small night operation to Blechhammer, which did not take place until November 13, I saw no indication of Allied night flights into the Auschwitz region. Photo-reconnaissance aircraft may, however, have operated in that sector at night. In any event, the briefing reports given bomber personnel shortly before they set out to bomb the Auschwitz industries included no mention of flaming chimneys.

I had hoped that my article would draw responses from people who had flown in the missions to Auschwitz and who could thus provide fuller information on such questions as whether U.S. Air Force personnel based in Italy had any awareness in 1944 of the murder operations that were going on at Auschwitz. I was disappointed, therefore, that Milt Groban's letter added little relevant information and seems to have been written without a careful reading of my essay.

For one thing, I did not advocate "prophylactic bombing of the concentration camp at Auschwitz." I did conclude that the extermination facilities, which were located at the far edge of the camp, should have been bombed—a position taken in 1944 by deeply concerned Jewish leaders and by the War Refugee Board. Mr. Groban's characterization of that position as "Kapo morality" is offensive and inaccurate. The belief that putting an end to the murder factories justified some loss of life has no relevance whatever to Kapos. Nor is Mr. Groban correct that the Fifteenth Air Force was able in its operations "to avoid injury to prisoners"—though it did not harm them intentionally. Camp records show that the bombing attacks on the Auschwitz industries killed and wounded prisoners. As to the very difficult and agonizing moral issue that Mr. Groban seems to be raising, I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dealt with it as meaningfully as I could in a limited space, focusing on the high percentage of deportees gassed immediately and the enormous mortality among those who, spared immediate execution, were assigned to the Auschwitz camp. I also showed that inmates at the time hoped and prayed for the gas chambers to be bombed. The letter from Mr. Loebel makes that point again.

Let me comment on Mr. Groban's other assertions.

Accuracy. Buildings 340-feet and 220-feet long are not "pickle barrels," and striking such buildings from heavy bombers at 20,000 to 26,000 feet was entirely possible. Under the favorable weather conditions for visual bombing that prevailed at Auschwitz in August 1944, radar-directed bombing was not needed. The crucial factors that could have limited bombing accuracy at Auschwitz were discussed in my article. The other possible problems that Mr. Groban lists, such as skill of crews, faulty equipment, tension, and the complications of the job, would hardly have ruled out a precision attack, especially if the Air Force had planned the mission with particular care. Most certainly, any move to strike the killing installations would not have involved a spur-of-the-moment change of target when the planes were already over the refinery, such as Mr. Groban sketches in his final paragraph.

If a precision-bombing attempt had not been effective, other approaches were available, as I wrote in the article and as I have discussed above in reference to Mr. Blum's letter.

Efficacy. I did not claim that mass killing would have been impossible without Auschwitz. I stated that "without gas chambers and crematoria, the Nazis would have been forced to reassess the extermination program in light of the need to commit new and virtually nonexistent manpower resources to mass killing." One must bear in mind that in the summer of 1944, unlike the situation in 1941 when the Babi Yar massacre took place, the Germans were desperately short of manpower and extremely hard-pressed on the military fronts. Even if the Nazis had reverted to mass shooting, the changeover would have taken time and thereby slowed the whole process. Additionally, the body-disposal problem would have returned. Experience had shown that this problem could not be solved by quicklime trenches.

Diversion of Forces. I do not find anything in this section of Mr. Groban's letter that calls into question the positions I took in my article. This section certainly does not challenge my statement that the Auschwitz death installations could have been attacked in August 1944 without diversion of considerable air support. As I showed, extensive bombing activity occurred in the Auschwitz region in August 1944.

Rail. The reason that the June 27, 1944 raid on the Reccos marshaling yard in Budapest "did not appear to affect the remarkable speed of the deportations of Jews from Hungary" is clear from a careful reading of my essay. Jews were not being deported from Budapest at that particular time. Furthermore, deportation trains could not have been blocked by hitting just any marshaling yard or stretch of track at random. As for the transient effect of railroad bombing, I emphasized that very point in my essay.

The main issue is not whether successful bombing of the murder installations could have been guaranteed. Or whether mass killing might have recommenced in some other way. The real question is, why wasn't a strong effort made to destroy those charnel houses? What we need is an answer to how it could be that decent people who held power knew that a place existed where thousands of helpless human beings were killed in an hour, knew that this occurred over and over again, and yet did not feel driven to search for some way to wipe such a scourge from the earth.

Incidentally, I have received letters asking if footnotes for my article are available. A full set of source notes may be obtained by sending 25¢ in coin (for the photocopying cost) and a stamped, self-addressed envelope to me at the Department of History, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts 01003.

Amnesty International

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As veterans of Amnesty International—members of a Geneva group for ten years or so—we have encountered many attacks on our impartiality. (An illuminating collection of attacks has been reproduced in *AI in Quotes*, published in 1976.) These charges, taken all in all, unintentionally testify to our impartiality, since AI has as often been called a tool of the CIA as a tool of Moscow. Critics on either side, however, can never deny AI's concern for prisoners in countries of opposite ideologies. To get around this problem, Tass, for example, explained away AI's concern with Chilean prisoners as an effort to blacken the Soviet Union by putting it on a par with a fascist country, while newspapers in rightist dictatorships like to call AI's reports on Communist countries a mere sham. Only Idi Amin of Uganda has appealed for the solidarity of all governments against AI, as when he told the UN's General Assembly in 1975 that AI "has blackmailed over 100 nations of the world as violators of human rights."

Stephen Miller's attack on AI ["Politics and Amnesty International," March] distinguishes itself from the others mainly by two facts: first, by being published in COMMENTARY, and second, by developing the notion that the number of paragraphs allotted to each country in AI's annual report—the more paragraphs, the worse the country—provides a means to measure AI's partiality.

Mr. Miller seems to imagine the hidden influence of a biased invisible hand (like that of the Elders of Zion?) which has "led to a distortion in AI's work." The number of printed lines in the annual report then reflect this distorted rating. Thus, he complains that such a good country as Switzerland "rates two paragraphs for violations of human rights whereas North Korea rates only one." Yet ten of the twenty lines on Switzerland merely tell the legal reasons why the introduction of a civil service for conscientious objectors cannot be put to a vote before 1980.

Instead of counting paragraphs, Mr. Miller should look at AI's real life. The work of AI is being done day by day by people who have jobs and families, political and cultural activities, and who not only give their time but also pay most of the expenses they incur in their activities for prisoners. One day, unexpectedly, these people learned about a coup d'état in Chile and received reports on arrests, killings, torture. Refugees appeared requesting urgent help for families and friends. Governments—such as Switzerland's—had to be pressed to grant entry visas. Money had to be found for

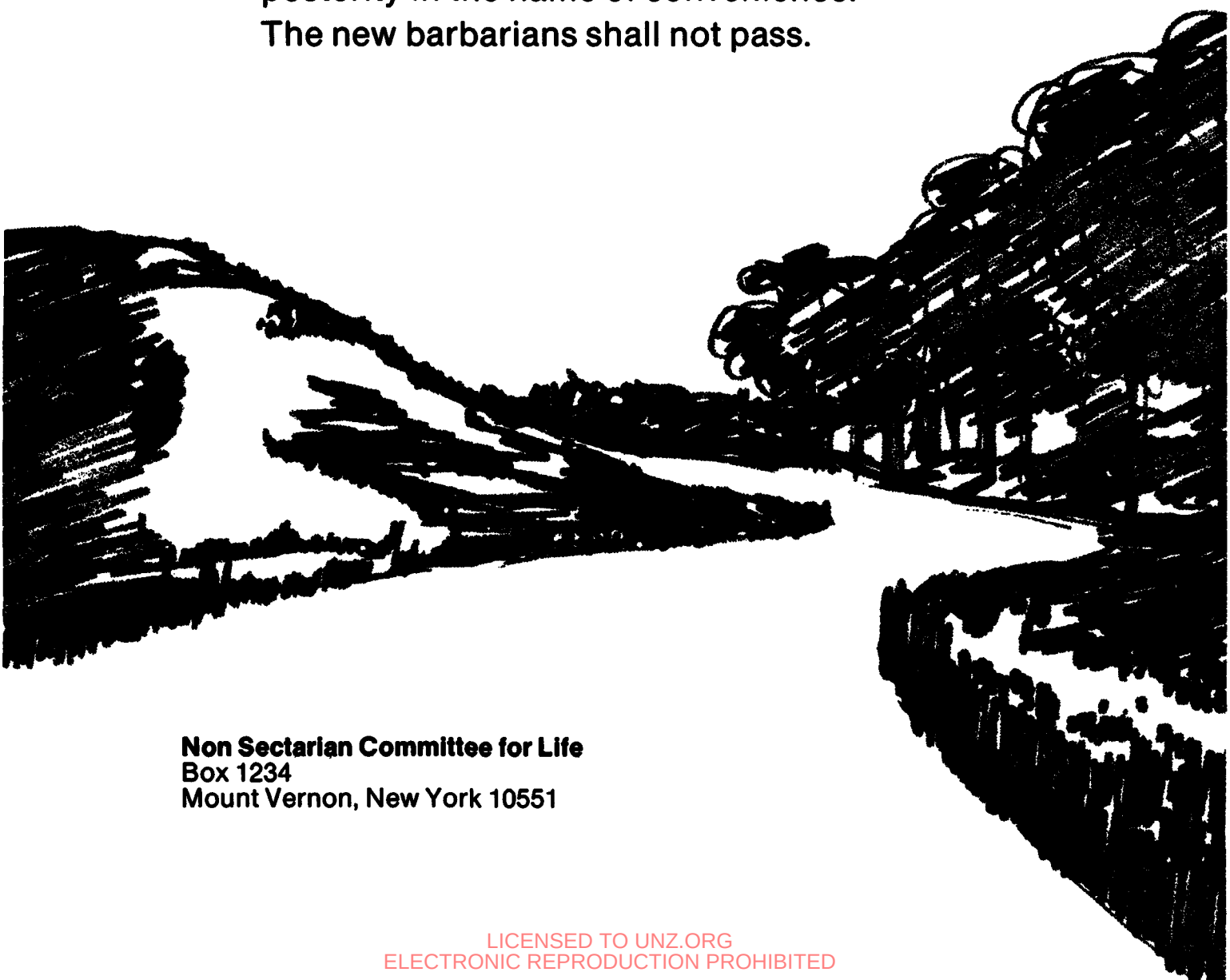
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ILS NE PASSERONT PAS

The clouds of a new Verdun overshadow Western man. The abortionists and their anarchist cohorts seek to destroy the standards of conduct which have placed man at the summit of creation.

A century that began by destroying a generation of its finest in the name of politics, may end by killing its very posterity in the name of convenience.

The new barbarians shall not pass.



Non Sectarian Committee for Life
Box 1234
Mount Vernon, New York 10551

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

plane tickets, and homes provided for refugees. New arrivals told of new cases and asked for interventions to save the lives of people who otherwise might quietly disappear forever. The work multiplied when thousands of those who apparently had been saved suddenly became victims in Argentina where they had sought refuge. Again, AI people were flooded with appeals—general and personal—to help.

Maybe during this period Mr. Miller could have brought us a balance sheet showing that as much misery, or much more, was being simultaneously produced in Cambodia. At that time, however, little was known about Cambodia. There were sickening rumors, but not even the names of the men in power were known, and postal service had stopped. Would Mr. Miller have suggested that we turn away from the people standing before us pleading for their dearest friends and instead make angry but necessarily empty gestures against the unknown bad men in Cambodia?

Naturally AI's annual report had to tell more about Chile and Argentina—where we had gotten to know thousands of names of people who had been arrested, tortured, killed, or had "disappeared"—than about Cambodia. Cambodia became a more concrete task only after the annual report had been prepared. Still, everyone who recognizes reality for what it is will admit that less can be done in some cases than in others. Would Mr. Miller suggest giving up our work altogether rather than submitting to imperfection?

In addition to the idea of counting paragraphs, Mr. Miller has brought up another point that shows he has not understood the basic principle of Amnesty International. He complains that AI sometimes makes rightist authoritarian regimes look worse than leftist totalitarian ones, by not taking into account the fact that in some rightist regimes opposition is sometimes possible and therefore very audible to the outside world. He does not see that it is not AI's endeavor, as it is not its task, to provide a rating of governments. AI is not concerned with forms of governments or with their images. AI is a prisoner-oriented movement. It does not work for or against states or countries. It works for the liberation of prisoners of conscience and against torture and other maltreatment of prisoners. (Capital punishment is a form of torture, as Dostoevsky has shown in *The Idiot*.) To be sure, there are other human-rights problems one would have to consider if one were judging a country as a whole, but it would be beyond the means of Amnesty International to take up these issues. If it tried to do so, it would not be able to fulfill the task to which it is dedicated. AI works to protect prisoners from the far greater power of governments; it is not concerned with giving governments good or bad marks.

DIANA DODGE and HENRY JACOBY
Geneva, Switzerland

STEPHEN MILLER writes:

Several points in Diana Dodge and Henry Jacoby's letter seem worthy of comment—though their remarks about COMMENTARY and the Elders of Zion are beneath discussion. First, in my article I clearly said that "the number of pages on each country *obviously* tells only part of the story." Nevertheless, it still strikes me that something is wrong with the way Amnesty International reports on human-rights violations when Singapore and China get an equal amount of coverage. Second, of course AI should be applauded for aiding refugees who seek its help, no matter what country they come from. My article did not talk about this aspect of its work but about the way in which, for example, AI made great efforts to publicize the goings-on in Chile whereas it talked very softly—and inaccurately—about the situation in Cuba, where there are many more political prisoners. Third, if AI is strictly a prisoner-oriented movement, then why does its newsletter publish misleading and inaccurate political analyses of the authoritarian regimes of Argentina and the Philippines? Fourth, responsible people differ on whether capital punishment should be retained or abolished, but they do not base their arguments on Russian novels. Finally, as I made clear in my closing sentence, AI's efforts have "brought hope to man." I do not want AI to give up its work. Rather, I want AI to stick to its original purposes, and be more scrupulous than it appears to have been in bringing to light human-rights violations wherever they occur in the world.

Uncivilized Discourse

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Ordinarily I would be opposed to COMMENTARY, or any respectable magazine for that matter, printing such crude and vulgar comments as those contained in Eugene D. Genovese's contribution to the symposium, "Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy" [April]. Mr. Genovese's cheap sneer—that those who support "bourgeois, capitalist" democracy and oppose socialism do so because "democracy is Western and . . . socialism, in fact if not theory, is Eastern . . . [because] Western means white and Eastern colored (even Lenin, the good books tell us, had Asiastic eyes) . . . [and because] Western [is] good and Eastern [is] bad, and niggers [are] expendable . . ."—is beneath contempt. Nevertheless, I wish to thank COMMENTARY for printing his contribution as is. For the fact that a truly distinguished and sophisticated historian such as Mr. Genovese—and even those who disagree with his political views recognize his eminence as a scholar—could descend to such . . . depths reveals with striking clarity the fierce and bitter irrationality of his anti-capitalist animus. . . .

I find Mr. Genovese's contribution disturbing, almost frightening, because it appears to me to be symptomatic of a whole series of vicious, personal attacks by certain spokesmen of the currently fashionable liberal Left against prominent and respected individuals whose positions may differ from theirs. Scholars like Edward N. Luttwak, Richard Pipes, and Paul Nitze who are concerned about the defense posture of the United States vis-à-vis the Soviet Union are branded as paranoid; anyone who questions the wisdom of racial quotas becomes an intellectual hit-man for a racist establishment—the list could go on and on. As one who believes that our democratic civilization depends in large measure upon the maintenance of reasoned and civilized discourse, which can still be candid, sharp, and critical, among people of opposing social and political viewpoints, I cannot but be depressed by the recent deterioration in the level of political discussion and arguments. . . .

LAWRENCE KAPLAN
McGill University
Montreal, Canada

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Come to Empire's Heat-and-Eat Barbecue

- **Savory Country-Style Barbecue Sauce!**
- **Tender-Cooked Chicken! • Ready-to-Eat!**
- **The Height of Convenience!**
- **Famous Empire Finest Quality!**
- **U.S. Government Inspected Wholesomeness!**
- **Buy a couple today — eat in good health!**

KOSHER Empire POULTRY

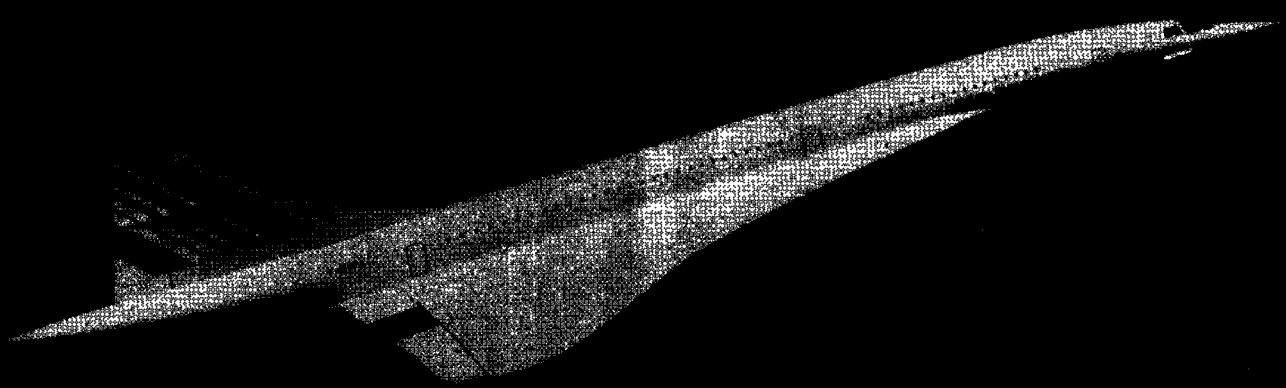
The Most Trusted Name in Kosher Poultry

At most Kosher Butcher Shops,

Dellys and Food Stores

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The gift of time.



AIR FRANCE Concorde

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Is Peace Still Possible in the Middle East?

The Role of the United States

Robert W. Tucker

THE history of America's Middle East policy since 1973 is marked by an apparent paradox. When measured by the scope of its aims and the degree of its involvement, this policy plainly seems more ambitious than ever. When judged by our present role of mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict, it also appears more successful than ever. Yet there has been no proportionate increase in the power at the disposal of American policy. Instead, a policy that has grown in ambition has been attended by a relative decline of American power. How far this decline has progressed over the past five years is a matter of controversy and uncertainty. What is certain is that the relative power of the United States in the region has diminished since the October war, and this despite our displacement of Soviet influence in the principal Arab state. For that displacement cannot be seen in isolation from other developments. It did not result in the reduction of Russian influence in a number of other Arab countries. Nor did it result in the reduction of Soviet military power in the region. According to the estimates of most expert observers in these matters, Moscow's military power there—as elsewhere—has increased relative to our own. Where these observers differ is over the degree and significance of the increase.

The loss of American power in the Middle East must also, and perhaps even primarily, be measured in relation to the principal Arab oil producers. Within the span of a few years, changes in power relationships have occurred that are almost without precedent. States which had once been the objects of American, and of European, power have come to enjoy a leverage with the great industrial consumers of Middle East petroleum that would have been dismissed as incredible only a decade ago. In the years which have followed this astonishing assertion of power—astonishing because it was made virtually without serious challenge—a considerable effort has been devoted to minimizing the loss suffered by the West, and in particular by America. What has happened, it is argued, is that a once dependent relationship has now become a relationship of interdependence. To this the point is generally added that the Arab oil producers—and above all Saudi Arabia—can be expected to act with moderation and restraint because it is in their interests to do so. The argument provides cold comfort. In this context, interdependence is no more than a euphemism for the loss of power formerly enjoyed, a loss attended by the hope—it can be no more—that those who now control access to an indispensable source of the world's energy will conform to Western views of prudence and self-interest.

It is against this general background that America's Middle East policy since 1973 must be seen. And against this background the conclusion forces itself that an apparently more ambitious policy is not rooted in the assurance that comes from a stable, let alone an ascending, position of power but in the anxiety that results from an awareness of growing vulnerability. This awareness forms the principal motivation that has prompted a deepened American involvement in the Middle East, and the same awareness accounts for the changing character of that involvement. A growing vulnerability must find its compensation in a policy designed above all to avoid the one contingency that might suddenly reveal the full dimensions of American decline. Thus, it is said that another war in the Middle East would hold out greater potential for superpower confrontation than did the 1973 war, which is itself seen as a sobering lesson in the dangers of permitting the Arab-Israeli conflict to erupt in armed hostilities. Such a confrontation might arise independently of another Arab oil embargo, or as a result of an embargo. An embargo would confront the United

ROBERT W. TUCKER, who writes frequently on the Middle East, is professor of international relations at John Hopkins and the author of, among other works, *A New Isolationism: Threat or Promise?* and *The Inequality of Nations.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

States with an agonizing choice of passivity or intervention. The risks of remaining passive could prove very considerable. Yet the risks of intervention could also prove very considerable, not least of all because of the prospect that intervention would be actively opposed by the Soviet Union.

Given these considerations and apprehensions, the determination of American governments to establish this nation as the mediator of the Arab-Israeli conflict becomes entirely understandable. The main lesson of the October war, and of developments related to the war, is that the United States must henceforth extend its full efforts to insuring the stability of the region. A further lesson, however, has been that stability cannot be insured by a policy that emphasizes the special relationship with Israel, that supports Israeli military predominance, and that refrains from bringing pressure to bear on Israel to give up any of the occupied territories in the absence of Arab willingness directly to seek peace with the victor of the 1967 war. This had been, in substance, American policy in the aftermath of the 1967 war and, the abortive Rogers plan apart, it more or less remained American policy until 1973.

The October war marked the beginning of a new policy whose general implications are clear only in retrospect. The prime desideratum of this policy is stability. But the promise of stability is incompatible with the maintenance of the post-1967 status quo. Israel can maintain this status quo only by the continued willingness to risk war on its behalf. In the circumstances of the past five years, however, war has been seen to threaten American interests as never before. Accordingly, the avoidance of a further round of hostilities cannot be left to the unaided and unguided will of the parties. Its avoidance must be sought through such alteration of the status quo as will satisfy the demands of those who in the absence of change may once again resort to war, who in desperation may once again turn to the Russians, and who in the last resort may once again make use of the oil weapon. To avoid these prospects, America must now preside over a process that will effect the necessary change in the status quo. It can do so by virtue of the special relationship it has with Israel.

In the past, this relationship had regularly placed the Arab confrontation states at odds with Washington. There was no intrinsic reason, though, why the relationship could not be transformed so as to constitute in Arab eyes an American asset rather than a liability. All would depend upon how it was now to be exploited by Washington. Properly exploited, it could win Arab support and place Washington in a position of great advantage over the Russians. What the Arabs wanted, Moscow could help them get only through war. But Washington could help them get what they wanted—or at least, what they now increasingly said they wanted—through far less dangerous methods. The myth of the 1973 Arab "victory"—a myth of crucial significance—might thus be preserved. With the sense of inferiority and humiliation now in part erased by a war that could be seen as a victory and by control over a resource that brought sudden wealth and deference, the Arab confrontation states and their principal supporters might at long last move in a direction of greater moderation. If so, the stage would be set for Washington to play the ambitious role it now cast for itself and which, indeed, it felt compelled to play because of its declining power and rising vulnerability.

II

These considerations point to a logic in America's Middle Eastern policy over the past five years that transcends the particular custodians of policy as well as their distinctive diplomatic methods and tactics of implementation. To say this is not to dismiss methods and tactics as being without significance, but only to insist that the starting point of inquiry and understanding must be what have been commonly seen since 1973 as the great imperatives of policy. These imperatives held quite as much for Henry Kissinger as they now hold for his successors. Indeed, it was Kissinger who first articulated them and who gave essential form to the new diplomatic design that emerged in the wake of the October war. It was Kissinger who sought to demonstrate the very great dangers of any further resort to arms not only for the parties to the Middle East conflict but for the world. Equally, it was Kissinger who remained passive before the challenge mounted by the oil producers and who, through his failure to respond, relinquished American interests and power to an extent we cannot accurately gauge even today. The twin threats posed by superpower confrontation and the oil weapon have since formed the major constraints on American policy. They are the imperatives to which the new policy has responded.

Even so, the response has not been uniform. Although Kissinger's apologists have made too much of the differences presumably separating his policy from that of his successors, there are differences and they are significant. In part, they reflect a contrasting outlook. Kissinger entertained a more profound view of the conflict than those who have followed him. He appreciated its deep-rooted character and the great obstacles in the way of its resolution. By contrast, his successors have often shown an optimism over the prospects of resolving the conflict that betrays little awareness of its almost intractable sources. Then, too, Kissinger was innately cautious, again in marked contrast to at least his self-chosen epigone, Brzezinski. It was this combination of a skeptical outlook and innate caution that led the former Secretary of State to a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

diplomatic design which held out the prospect of only apparently modest results.

The diplomacy of step-by-step put forth no grand design for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. It deliberately avoided even the suggestion of what the eventual shape of an overall settlement might be. Instead, step-by-step diplomacy sought to maintain a minimum stability, a stability to be achieved through a series of limited agreements that left ambiguous the shape of the ultimate outcome. Its premise was that where the parties to a conflict are unable to agree upon the outlines of a general settlement, limited agreements are possible only by leaving the greater issues in abeyance. What adversaries will not accept when presented as a whole, they may accept when unfolded over a period of time in increments—or steps. Limited agreements might serve progressively to narrow the initially profound differences separating adversaries while slowly establishing an increasing measure of trust and confidence.

This was the well-known rationale of step-by-step diplomacy. From the Israeli viewpoint, Kissinger's policy was objectionable not because it failed to set forth the general outlines of a settlement, nor because it demanded too much from Israel even when measured against the American promise of greatly increased economic and military aid. Instead, the principal objection centered on the American willingness to mediate under Arab pressure and to do so without insisting upon Arab concessions in return for Israeli concessions. The pattern established by Kissinger relieved the Arabs of negotiating directly with the Israelis for the return of territory. At the same time, it served to transmit Arab pressure through the American mediator to Israel. The effectiveness and credibility of step-by-step diplomacy depended on the Arabs' retaining confidence in the ability of the American government to show "progress," that is, to demonstrate that it could bring sufficient pressure to bear on the Israelis to make concessions. Thus, progress and minimum stability depended upon the American ability and willingness to hold out to Israel a compelling mixture of sanctions and rewards. Kissinger resorted to both, though he understandably preferred the latter. In either case, the effectiveness of step-by-step diplomacy was necessarily a function of Israel's degree of dependence on the United States, a dependence the 1973 war had increased and that American policy served to increase further.

Did Kissinger's diplomacy contain the seeds of the diplomacy that succeeded him? Is it fair to say that those who followed Kissinger have simply carried his policy to its logical conclusion? The questions are difficult to answer with any assurance. Quite possibly, Kissinger would have resisted doing what his successors have done. After all, policies are often perverted precisely by being carried to their logical conclusion. The line separating compromise from appeasement, or firmness from intransigence, depends on not pushing too far. In the case at hand, there is the added consideration that the architect of the policy apparently did not intend pushing beyond a certain point. This explains why he was content to leave the Geneva option stillborn, and why he paid no more than lip service to the notion of a comprehensive settlement. It also explains his reluctance even to acknowledge, let alone seriously to address his attention to, the Palestinian problem.

On the other hand, it is quite possible that had Kissinger remained in office he would have moved well beyond his initial design. For this design relieved only immediate pressures, and then only at considerable cost. It did not and probably could not adequately respond to the dangers that Kissinger was as intent on avoiding as are those who have followed him. Once the great imperatives of American policy had been defined as they were defined in 1973, there was very little alternative to moving beyond the seemingly modest objectives of step-by-step diplomacy. Kissinger admitted as much when he acknowledged that step-by-step had probably run its course after the conclusion of the September 1975 Sinai agreement. Yet if this were true, what assurance was there that minimum stability would be maintained? In what manner could the United States satisfactorily respond to rising Arab demands for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and for the creation of a Palestinian state? In the final year of his period in office, Kissinger had no ready answers to these questions. But his successors did.

III

The Carter administration came to power determined to remedy the shortcomings in America's Middle East policy. What Kissinger had seen as the virtues of his policy, his successors saw as serious defects. The new presidential assistant for national security, Zbigniew Brzezinski, had on more than one occasion in earlier years criticized the Kissinger diplomacy for its ambiguity. The policy of step-by-step, Brzezinski had urged, placed Israel in an unfortunate dilemma. By refusing to agree to a particular step without knowing where it might ultimately lead, Israel appeared intransigent. Yet by agreeing to a particular step without knowing where it might lead, Israel ran considerable risk. On the Arab side, Brzezinski argued, the step-by-step approach sowed the distrust that had been evident between Egypt and Syria in the aftermath of the 1975 Sinai agreement. Committed to partial settlements, to separate deals, the Kissinger policy worked to divide the Arab states through encouraging agreements that would be seen by at least some Arabs as a betrayal of their common cause. This consequence alone was seen as a fatal defect, since it was taken as axiomatic then, as it still is today, that just as the major Arab regimes could only

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

make war together they also could only make peace together. A strategy that either sought to divide these regimes or had the effect of doing so was held to be inimical to American interests.

The more general criticism of step-by-step, whether by Brzezinski or by others, was that it amounted to little more than sophisticated Micawberism. Beneath its rather pretentious verbal trappings, Kissinger's diplomacy merely served to buy time in the hope that something might turn up. But little, if anything, was considered likely to turn up. Instead, time was being bought for reasons and in ways that would only exacerbate tensions already high.

Kissinger's soon-to-be successors did not, however, differ from his general conception of the "problem" in achieving a Middle East settlement. The dilemma of such a settlement, Kissinger had often declared, "is to balance physical security against legitimacy." How was the balance to be struck in practice? The former Secretary of State was careful not to commit himself. Perhaps he had never resolved the dilemma in his own mind. Others had. Brzezinski, never one to be daunted by dilemmas, immediately struck the balance that had eluded Kissinger. "How does a nation become 'legitimate' to its neighbors?" he asked. His reply, of more than historical interest, was this:

> Only with an arrangement that gives Israel security, and also gives it to its neighbors, with borders that are mutually acceptable and hence have not been imposed by one side or the other, can the reality of coexistence be translated by history into "legitimate acceptance." In other words, the sequence cannot be . . . from recognition of legitimacy to a territorial settlement, resolving along the way the future of the Palestinians, but the other way around. By creating a situation in which both sides become secure, and thereby find it more possible to coexist with each other, the basis for "legitimacy" will be laid.*

This brief statement reveals, and with great clarity, an outlook on the Arab-Israeli conflict that goes far in explaining the subsequent policy of the Carter administration. What Brzezinski was saying is that Israel's illegitimacy in Arab eyes derives not from its "being" but from its "doing," that is, from Israel's continued occupation of Arab territories and from its treatment of the Palestinians. Let Israel return the occupied territories and agree to self-determination for the Palestinians and it will create the basis for its legitimacy. Brzezinski was of course aware of the fact that the issue of Israel's legitimacy long predated the 1967 war. If he nevertheless argued that legitimacy would result through undoing the consequences of that war (plus permitting the creation of a Palestinian state), it could only be because he assumed by 1975 that the Arabs had already changed, that in the main they had already become moderate in their view of the conflict, and that what stood in the way of a concrete expression of this moderation was Israel's refusal to give back what it had taken in 1967.

In contrast to step-by-step diplomacy, the critics of Kissinger argued that the only viable approach to the Middle East conflict was one that sought a comprehensive settlement. The concessions such a settlement would require of Israel were, from the outset, quite clear. By contrast, the concessions that would be required of the Arab states were considerably less than clear. Although Kissinger had been reproached for the risks he had pressured the Israelis to take without knowing where they might lead, the risks had in fact been of limited character. Given their incremental nature, they could be compensated for, if the need arose, and even reversed. This was a saving virtue of Kissinger's policy. The policy advocated by those of his critics who favored a comprehensive settlement did not consist of limited steps but of one giant step that, once taken, could be reversed only with great difficulty, if at all.

The irreversibility of a comprehensive settlement was and remains a virtue in the eyes of its proponents. Yet undeniably it also raised a large difficulty. Unless Israel could be assured that its legitimacy *and* security were placed beyond serious question by a comprehensive settlement, the charge that had been made against Kissinger could also be made, and with far greater justice, against those criticizing him in the name of such a settlement. This was all the more true if a comprehensive settlement were not in fact comprehensive, as the early proposals were not, in that a resolution of the issue of legitimacy, with a concomitant normalization of relations, was expected only to follow from a settlement.

Finally, even if the issue of legitimacy were to be resolved, there would remain the issue of security. Legitimacy is not the perennial concern of states; rather it is security. A legitimate Israel could not be equated with a secure Israel. Legitimacy was undoubtedly a significant part of Israel's security problem, but it was not and could not be the whole of it. History affords any number of examples of states that have been regarded as legitimate by their neighbors, yet were insecure. In many cases, they were insecure even though they held no territories taken in war or to which their neighbors could otherwise lay rightful claim. And they were insecure not because they perceived themselves to be insecure but because, in some instances, they faced neighbors who for any number of reasons were potentially hostile and against

* "An Exchange on the Mideast," *Foreign Policy*, Winter 1975-76, p. 217. The statement was made in reply to Shlomo Avineri, who had criticized Brzezinski and others for "overlooking the fact that the real issue for Israel, in the long run, is not security but legitimacy, and that everything in the Middle East revolves around this."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

whom they had little if any strategic depth for defense.

These remarks, which may seem banal, are made only because in the context of the never-ending dialogue on the Arab-Israeli conflict the distinction they point to is regularly either overlooked, or confused, or—not infrequently—simply dismissed. Kissinger certainly appreciated the distinction, though, by his ponderous formulations of the Middle East problem, he often confused others. Kissinger's principal critics and eventual successors have also appreciated the distinction. Although they have consistently maintained that the Israeli concern for security verges on the obsessive, they have denied neither that the concern is real nor that in some measure at least it is just. From the outset, their response to this concern has been the proposal of a guarantee—ultimately an American guarantee. Whether implicit or explicit, the guarantee has been, throughout, the means that is expected to remove the ultimate obstacle to a comprehensive settlement. It is, without exaggeration, the key to virtually all of the proposals for a comprehensive settlement. Without the guarantee, such proposals have always been vulnerable to the criticism that they would, if acted upon, place Israel in a position where—even though legitimacy had been obtained—it might well be unable to defend itself.

The need for a guarantee to attend a comprehensive settlement was acknowledged in the December 1975 report of the Brookings study group bearing the title, *Toward Peace in the Middle East*. The Brookings study group included members (Brzezinski, William Quandt, Robert Bowie) destined to occupy critical positions in the Carter administration. The report was represented as a compromise position of a group whose members otherwise entertained quite diverse views toward the Arab-Israeli conflict (discreetly termed a "dispute"). It was "essential," the report declared, that a comprehensive settlement "be promptly found." The failure to find such a settlement threatened the renewal of hostilities, with all the incalculable consequences war might now bring. But while insistent on the great dangers held out by war, the report is optimistic on the prospects of peace. The parties are seen as disposed to negotiate a permanent settlement. What they lack is a viable plan, a satisfactory framework for negotiations, and the proper encouragement.

The Brookings proposals are indeed comprehensive. They call not only for the establishment of mutually acceptable boundaries (defined essentially as the pre-1967 lines), the acceptance of a Palestinian right of self-determination (together with resettlement of Palestinian refugees in a newly-formed Palestinian entity), and something approaching the internationalization of Jerusalem, but also for a peace that comprises the normalization of relations (though full normalization is made a long-term objective). The settlement is to be implemented in stages that are to be spelled out explicitly. These stages, the report reads, "will require considerable time, probably several years, for full implementation." Who will ultimately determine whether the agreement is being carried out in good faith is left unclear. Face-to-face negotiations among the parties is called for, though within a more general framework that should include the United States and the Soviet Union. The parties "will need help," the report emphasizes, and this can best come from the great powers who should also be prepared to guarantee the settlement reached.

What is significant in the Brookings report is not so much the specific content of the settlement it prescribes as its assumptions and general tone, which bear a striking resemblance to the assumptions and tone of the present administration. The idea that there is no viable alternative to a comprehensive settlement, that the parties, particularly the Arabs, are ready for such a settlement, that without it a war disastrous to American interests is inevitable and imminent, and that a comprehensive settlement can be negotiated and implemented in no more than several years—this is evidently the idea held by the Carter administration. So, too, the insistent tone that the great powers, particularly the United States, can and, if necessary, will do for the parties—particularly Israel—what unaided they may be unable to do for themselves is the authentic tone of the Carter administration.

MUCH has been made of the mystery that is Jimmy Carter. What is he really committed to? Did he mean what he said in his campaign speeches about his commitment to Israel? If he did, how does one reconcile his statements before becoming President with his actions as President? Nor is the difficulty merely one of reconciling campaign speeches with presidential actions. As late as May of this year, on the occasion of Israel's thirtieth anniversary, Carter reaffirmed in emotional terms and "without reservation" the nation's ties with Israel. The United States, the President declared, "will never waver from our deep friendship and partnership with Israel; our total absolute commitment to Israel's security." Yet at the moment Carter was making this vow to Israel's Prime Minister, his administration was pressing hard for congressional approval of a measure—the sale of planes to Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia—that appeared to strike at the core of the special relationship which had once largely defined American policy toward Israel.

Are we to conclude that the President has been insincere, that he would not have acted as he has over the past year and a half if he meant what he has often said? Not necessarily. It may be that he has been quite sincere and that his very sincerity affords a guide to his actions. Carter may well believe that all of his actions have been in the best

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

interests of Israel, even if the Israelis and their supporters often have not had the detachment to appreciate this. It is, indeed, the President's sincerity that may provide a clue to the apparent equanimity with which he views his actions. His conviction that he is committed to act only in Israel's best interests enables him to dismiss the charges that he may have acted otherwise. Carter's sincerity permits very little self-doubt. Nor is his assurance disturbed by the recognition that his first duty, after all, is to pursue *this* nation's interests in the Middle East, not Israel's. He appears persuaded that the interests of the two countries, if properly seen, are congruent, and that what is good for the United States is also good for Israel. In this, he is at one with many of Israel's ardent supporters, who differ only in that they would reverse the terms of the equation.

On occasion, it is true, the President's more sophisticated advisers have been known to acknowledge a disparity of interests between the two countries, but they have rarely done so openly. And even when they have expressed themselves off the record, they have added that the disparity would be reduced to marginal significance if only Israel were to take a more detached and clearer view of its real interests. To pressure Israel into doing so they have seen as unavoidable. The outlook that has characterized the Carter administration from the outset is perhaps best expressed in the title of a well-known essay by George Ball, "How to Save Israel in Spite of Herself."* An outsider, Ball voices the same aggressively well-meaning concern over Israel's security and well-being as do a number of the President's advisers. Writing in the early months of the Carter administration, he also expressed most of the central assumptions of this administration's policy while anticipating much of the strategy it would follow.

It is imperative, Ball wrote, that the stalemate in the Middle East be broken. If it is not, the likelihood is that the present moderate leadership in the Arab front-line states—and Saudi Arabia—will be replaced by radical leadership. Should this once happen, the stage will be set for war, with all the dangers another war must hold out for superpower confrontation and the Arab use of the oil weapon. Even without war, the absence of substantial progress toward resolving the conflict may lead the Arabs to the use of this weapon. But the kind of progress needed can no longer be achieved through partial solutions. Nothing less than a comprehensive settlement can ward off the otherwise imminent prospects of instability and war.

The difficulty, Ball argued, is that neither side is willing or able to break the stalemate with a compromise solution the other side can accept. This being the case, the United States has little alternative but to pursue an "assertive" diplomacy which will do for the parties what they are unable to do for themselves. It is not a matter of imposing a settlement, but merely of insisting that both sides carry out the "straightforward trade-off" envisaged by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 242. The trade-off, as Ball saw it, was on most points similar to the Brookings proposals. He dissented from the earlier proposals only in doubting the desirability of implementing a comprehensive settlement by stages. Moreover, in his proposal, the Arabs would be required not only to recognize a sovereign Jewish state but to commit themselves at once as part of the settlement to full normalization of relations.

ALTHOUGH Ball went well beyond what the Carter adminstration considered at the time as politically feasible, he accurately reflected the administration in his insistence upon a comprehensive settlement, in his fears for the future if a breakthrough were not soon made, in his assessment of Arab moderation together with his anxiety over warding off the threat of Arab radicalism, and in his conviction that—given the sources of Arab strength—"time is clearly not working on Israel's side." Thus, American and Israeli interests, properly perceived, compelled the grand solution Ball outlined. If the Israelis and their American supporters could not be brought to understand this through reason, they would have to be pressured into doing so. Ball did not hesitate to point to the means whereby the American government might bring the Israelis to reason. By contrast, he was remarkably silent about the pressures that might be placed on the Arabs. His essay left the clear impression that these pressures did not exist, and that, if anything, it was the Arabs who might more effectively bring pressure to bear on America.

The Ball effort illuminated the policy landscape, but the light was too bright for the new administration. Political realities required a strategy of indirection, one less overt and more subtle than Ball proposed. The problem was how to get from where the administration found itself to where it wanted to go. As long as the special relationship with Israel remained more or less intact, this would prove to be no easy task. Kissinger, it is true, had used the relationship to establish America as the mediator in the Middle East, and in doing so he had already altered its character, since the new role required greater American pressure on Israel. Still, there were limits to the pressures the Kissinger policy dictated, if only because the concrete concessions he demanded of Israel also remained quite circumscribed. The fabric of the special relationship had begun to show distinct signs of wear at the edges, but it was not yet badly torn.

The policy of the Carter administration clearly necessitated more drastic measures. If Israel opposed the comprehensive settlement the administration had determined to achieve—which it could

* *Foreign Affairs*, April 1977, pp. 453-71.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be expected to do—the special relationship would have to be ended. Indeed, it would have to be changed in any event, since the requirements of the comprehensive settlement the administration envisaged—requirements which reflected what were now the settled imperatives of American policy—could scarcely be reconciled with the character the special relationship had previously taken. The "new" special relationship, if there were to be one, would have to be expressed in the form of a guarantee to Israel that would attend the comprehensive settlement. In the meantime, however, the old relationship stood in the way of such a settlement and would have to be broken.

George Ball had not minced words about this. The administration, he warned, would have to take the bit in its teeth and confront both Israel and its supporters in this country. Ball recalled and held up as an example President Eisenhower's action of twenty years ago in forcing Israel to withdraw from the Sinai. But the Carter administration, beginning with the President, was not given to the kind of resolute action Ball urged, and the circumstances of 1977 were not those of 1956. Besides, the President had committed himself both before and after his election not to use American military and economic aid to pressure Israel, and had repeatedly criticized Henry Kissinger for having done just this. In politics, commitments are always at a discount, but a decent interval must at least be observed before they are discounted. Caution was required, particularly in the period before the Israeli elections. And there were indications that with the then Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, out of the way, Washington anticipated greater flexibility from his designated successor, Shimon Peres. Instead, the Carter administration was confronted with Menachem Begin.

THERE is no evidence that the Begin victory affected the essential outlines of American policy. The determination to push toward a comprehensive settlement within a reconstituted Geneva framework in which all the parties to the conflict—hence to the settlement—were represented, as well as to insist that such a settlement include both Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied territories (with minor modifications of the borders) and the creation of a Palestinian entity with the substance, if not the forms, of independence, were taken quite apart from political developments in Israel. So, too, the overall tactics to be employed were conceived without reference to the particular government in Israel. These tactics may best be described by the same metaphor that described the Kissinger policy. In moving to Geneva and in creating the negotiating framework for Geneva, the administration would proceed step-by-step.

Thus the meaning of UN Resolution 242 would be "clarified" through a series of interpretations which, in their cumulative effect, would enable satisfactory representation of the Palestinians at Geneva and, in broad outline, shape the desired terms of settlement. In the meantime, Israel and its American supporters could also be dealt with in steps, but here according to the formula of Lenin's famous pamphlet: "Two Steps Forward, One Step Backward." Confrontations were not to be avoided, since that was impossible. Once they occurred, however, the administration would eventually back a step away. But the retreat would leave the special relationship on a changed, and lower, plateau. The advantages of this tactic are apparent. The element of risk involved in one grand confrontation would be avoided. At the same time, the administration would appear to be bending over backward to accommodate Israel and its supporters while the latter would appear, as ever, inflexible.

The advent of the Begin government did not result in an alteration of tactics but simply made the tactics already chosen a good deal easier to apply. Given Begin's record, and particularly his well-known position toward the West Bank, the administration seemed to have found an adversary made to order for its tactics. In fact, the practical difference separating the new Israeli Prime Minister from his predecessors was easily exaggerated. The Rabin government—and very likely a Peres government—was no more ready to negotiate Washington's comprehensive settlement than was Begin. The policy of the Rabin government was to sit tight and to wait. The difference was that in the case of the Rabin government, sitting tight, particularly in the West Bank and Gaza, was justified in terms of security, whereas in the new government it was justified in terms of historic claims and security. In theory, the one policy was provisional, the other permanent, a difference not unimportant for opinion in America. In practice, though, the difference was marginal.

Throughout the summer and early fall of last year the Carter administration addressed its efforts to setting the stage for Geneva. At almost every turn, these efforts were to bring the administration into conflict with the Israeli government, though only on rare occasions with Arab governments. Yet the formal record shows that Washington was asking for concessions from the Arabs as well as from the Israelis. As a June 27 statement of the State Department insisted: "We are not asking for one-sided concessions from anyone." Why, then, did this even-handedness lead to one-sided conflicts?

In part, the answer may be found not so much in what Washington was asking but in the manner in which it was asking. In the June 27 statement, for example, the Arab states were told they "will have to agree to implement a kind of peace which produces confidence in its desirability," a peace that not only involves satisfactory security arrangements but that "also involves steps toward the normalization of relations with Israel." Israel was told that it "clearly should withdraw from occupied

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

territories" and that "no territories, including the West Bank, are automatically excluded from the items to be negotiated . . . to exclude any territories strikes us as contradictory to the principle of negotiations without preconditions."

The statement—in the manner of similar statements of the period—was evidently directed primarily to Israel and not to the Arab states. Its intent was to admonish the Begin government, to warn it of the consequences it might expect unless it became more flexible. Hence the specificity of what was required of Israel and the emphasis with which the requirements were expressed, in contrast to the general, even vague, concessions required of the Arab states.

IN LARGE part, however, the conflicts between Washington and Jerusalem were simply the result of the Carter administration's determination to do precisely what it disavowed doing. Although insistent upon the principle of negotiations without preconditions, Washington was setting, slowly but surely, a number of preconditions. The process of doing so had not started with the coming to power of the Begin government; it had been initiated some months before. There was, moreover, an apparently reasonable ground for doing so—namely, United Nations Security Council Resolution 242. For the text of that resolution, taken literally, did not support the principle of negotiations without preconditions. On the contrary, 242 laid down a substantial number of such conditions, in the form of principles that were to guide the course and broadly determine the outcome of negotiations.

It did not matter that these principles could be and were interpreted in a number of different and quite conflicting ways. In the years since the resolution had been passed, there had never been agreement upon what it required. A huge literature, almost theological in flavor, had sprung up devoted to what 242 required, in what order its requirements were to be met, and the character of the negotiating process by which these requirements were to be met. The text of 242 was a delight for the exegetically minded. Not only were there flourishing disagreements over what Resolution 242 *said*, there were disagreements over what it *was*. In the statement of the State Department noted above, 242 is variously referred to as a "starting point" for a negotiated peace, a "process of negotiations," and a "framework for negotiations."

The many meanings and faces of 242 were of course no accident. The resolution was the product of the parties involved, directly and indirectly, in the Middle East conflict. To be acceptable to them, it had to respond to their disparate interests and, on the whole, it has done so with marked success. The Carter administration found in 242 a ready and useful instrument for advancing its design of a comprehensive peace and, more immediately, for prodding Israel. The Israelis were reminded that every administration since 1967 had "consistently supported" the resolution. This was literally the case. What was not was the implication that every administration had given the same nuanced interpretation of and general policy significance to Resolution 242. In the hands of the present administration, the emphasis on the "territorial" aspects of 242 reflected the change in policy that had taken place. The beauty of 242 was that it helped to obscure the shift under the guise of a consistent devotion to principle.

Even where the famous resolution might have appeared as an obstacle to American policy, it was not. The resolution gave no status to the Palestinians. It did not even speak of Palestinians, let alone of their right to self-determination, but only affirmed the need to "achieve a just settlement of the refugee problem."* Given this wording and the circumstances in which it was agreed upon, the most reasonable interpretation was that the resolution assumed a solution of the Palestinian problem within something approaching the old—that is, pre-1967—territorial framework. The Arab states had made it clear, however, that there must be self-determination for the Palestinians and that there would be no Geneva conference without their representation. Before this demand, the administration had not been disposed to literalness in interpreting Resolution 242. The spirit, not the form, of the resolution was the essential thing. But the spirit called for a comprehensive peace, a peace which could not be achieved without satisfactorily addressing the Palestinian issue, by now seen as the very heart of the conflict. The difficulty was that for the Arab states representation meant the PLO, and on this Israel was adamant, since consent to such representation would have been tantamount to recognition.

In the early fall, the Carter administration made a heroic effort to bridge the gap. Although the Arabs had to be satisfied, on this issue the Israelis could not be openly abandoned. The device of a unified Arab delegation, presumably the result of the September talks between Secretary Vance and Foreign Minister Davan, might if liberally interpreted have satisfied the several parties. That device already came very close to covert recognition of the PLO. In the interpretation Dayan himself subsequently was alleged to have made, the Israelis would not look too closely into the credentials of those representing the Palestinians. The Begin government had moved, but Washington sought to move it still further, now through the Russians. In October, a joint Soviet-American statement on the Middle East went beyond any previous American position. A resolution of the

* The "refugees," it should be recalled, included not only the Arabs who had formerly lived in what was now Israel, together with those who had left the West Bank in 1967, but the Jews who had left Arab lands in the late 1940's and early 1950's and emigrated to Israel.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Palestinian question, the statement read, must include "insuring the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people" within a Geneva peace conference, "with participation in its work of the representatives of all parties involved in the conflict including those of the Palestinian people. . . ." The Soviet-American statement did not "introduce" the Russians into the administration's plan for a Middle East settlement. They had never been excluded from that plan. The American action did convey the message that Washington would not hesitate to pay for Soviet support, though the ultimate price might be charged to Israel.

Thus, by early November the Carter administration had gone quite far along the road leading to Geneva. Whether the conference would have convened by the year's end, as the American plan called for, remained doubtful at the time, since the critical issue of Palestinian representation was still unresolved. Whether, if it had convened, it would have marked any real progress is even more doubtful, given the chasm separating the two sides and, for that matter, given the differences among the Arabs themselves. Though the administration had put forth its best effort, there were still distinct limits to the pressure that could be brought to bear on Israel. These limits could not easily be breached so long as the position of the Arab countries—particularly the major Arab country—remained substantially unchanged. It was not enough to argue that the Arab confrontation states had moved toward a more moderate position and that they now accepted Israel as a fact. So long as they insisted that they would not recognize Israel, that they would not acknowledge its legitimacy, and that the prospects for normalization of relations were virtually nonexistent, the Carter administration had to contend with forces at home which continued to place sharp constraints on its policy. The events of November were to change these constraints.

IV

THERE is little reason to assume that Washington had any foreknowledge of the Sadat initiative. The astonishment with which the Carter administration received the news did not seem feigned. As late as forty-eight hours before the Sadat departure for Jerusalem, more than one high American official had been heard to dismiss the Egyptian's bid as a "public-relations stunt." If Washington officialdom was acting, it had seldom before given so dazzling a performance. Was the Israeli government equally taken by surprise? The story persists that it was not, and that although it may not have known the manner in which Sadat would make his initiative, it did know that an initiative would be forthcoming. During the preceding months, Egypt and Israel had conducted negotiations through third parties. They had even agreed upon the approximate terms of a peace settlement, a separate peace. Egypt would get back the Sinai and without the conditions Israel was subsequently to attach. In turn, Cairo would be content with a very general declaration of principles on the disposition of the other territories. Once this was made, Egypt's duty toward its Arab brothers would be considered fulfilled.

Although dismissed by the involved parties, and treated with skepticism by most Middle East experts, the story is not on its face implausible. For it was not only Jerusalem that was unhappy with the Carter administration's Geneva-bound policy. Cairo was also unhappy, though for different reasons. The administration's Geneva vision held out no visible benefits to Egypt. Instead, it promised to advertise its declining influence in Arab councils and its growing inability to exercise any real initiative. Caught between a Syrian-Palestinian bloc, supported by the Soviet Union, and the Begin government, Sadat would have little if any room for maneuver. Even if Israel, under American pressure, made concessions, they would further strengthen the Syrian—and Palestinian—position, not Egypt's. If Israel resisted making any concessions, Egypt would be no better off. Geneva presented Sadat with the choice either of appearing impotent or—if he sided with the Syrians and the PLO—intransigent. In the latter case, his prospects of receiving the American support he desired —particularly arms—might well diminish further. (To this extent, at least, Sadat may well have thought that in warding off Geneva he was saving the Carter administration from itself.)

In going to Jerusalem, then, Sadat sought to restore a declining position in the Arab world and to recover an independence of action. He had undertaken his dramatic move not only from a sense of growing frustration but from a sense of growing weakness. But if a growing weakness had largely driven him to make his initiative, the same weakness placed constraints on his ability to carry it out. To sustain it, to follow through with a separate peace, he needed all the help and cooperation he could get from Israel and the United States. Indeed, it is arguable that Washington's support was in the last analysis even more critical than Israel's. Of course, Jerusalem also had to play the game and this required, at a minimum, demonstrating by word and deed that Egypt would get back, without conditions, what it had lost in the 1967 war. In the event, Israel did not play the game as it might have, and should have, done. The Begin government did not offer to return the Sinai without conditions. Nor did it make the dramatic gesture which it might have made of immediately beginning a thinning out of forces in the Sinai. Instead, it permitted the momentum necessary for concluding a separate peace to falter by setting conditions on its offer to return the Sinai and by spurning the dramatic gesture. To make matters worse, Begin came to Washington to seek approval

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of his plan for administrative autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza.

We can only speculate on why Begin took the actions he did. It does not seem unreasonable to assume, however, that the conditions attached to giving back the Sinai were made in response to what Jerusalem saw as a rising Egyptian price on the West Bank. If so, Begin was using the Sinai as leverage to moderate this rising price. Any other interpretation must assume that the Israeli government was from the outset unwilling to consider the Sinai as the necessary price for peace with Egypt, that to detach Egypt from the conflict, and thereby to transform its character, was not worth abandoning the settlements and military bases in the Rafiah salient. But this assumption must disregard what for two decades had been the cherished vision of Israeli governments, and a vision that Begin had shared with his political opponments. To say that the Israeli Prime Minister should have refrained from using the Sinai as a bargaining counter once he felt the Egyptians were raising their price on the West Bank, that he should have ignored this move and driven ahead on the Sinai, is very different from charging that he was simply unwilling to yield on the issue of the Rafiah salient. The former criticism is serious enough; the latter charge suggests an obduracy and incompetence of an entirely different—and, indeed, implausible—order.

Equally, and perhaps even more important, is the question: why did Begin come *to Washington* with his plan for the West Bank and Gaza? Why did he thus effectively deal Washington back in the game, the same Washington that had been leaning so heavily on him in the preceding months and that had clearly established the patterns of judging Israeli concessions by the test of their acceptability to the Arab states? Why, indeed, did Begin even need a plan at this point? If Egypt could not be satisfied with the Sinai and a very broad statement of principles, acceptable even by Begin's standards, it could hardly be satisfied with his plan. For the plan, whatever its real merits as a first step toward a resolution of the Palestinian problem, and they were not inconsiderable, could still only have the effect of reaffirming the position that for the foreseeable future Israel was not prepared to consider self-determination for the Palestinians.

One answer to these questions is that Sadat's price on the West Bank and Gaza had been impossibly high from the very start, that he had indeed meant what he said in addressing the Knesset, that his aim was a comprehensive peace and only a comprehensive peace, and that Begin, appreciating this, had devised his plan and taken it to Washington for the purpose of countering the effects of Sadat's initiative. For reasons elaborated elsewhere,* this answer seems implausible in its interpretation of the Sadat move. But even if it is accepted for the sake of argument, the Begin response was woefully inadequate. The Israeli government could not in this manner counter the effects of so apparently grand a gesture as Sadat had made, and to suppose that it believed otherwise is to impute to it an extraordinary naiveté. Whether Sadat was sincere in putting forth his *stated* terms of settlement, or whether his entire move had been mere grandstanding for the Americans, a very different response was required. By responding as he did, however, Begin gave every indication that he was not engaging in mere counter-posture. His introduction of the plan and his attempt to elicit Washington's approval of it may have been mistakes. Still, these actions appear as a serious response to what Begin saw at the time as a new and imposing obstacle in the way of a separate peace with Egypt.

The obstacle, of course, was the Palestinian issue. Had it always been there or had Washington, after its initial surprise and confusion, been instrumental in reintroducing it? Certainly, it had always been apparent that any Egyptian-Israeli agreement would have to deal *in some manner* with the Palestinians. But the manner in which the issue might be dealt with would evidently depend largely on the position taken by the United States. With strong American support, it might be kept to a modest role in the negotiations. Without such support, this would prove supremely difficult to do, for then Sadat would be fully exposed to his one-time allies. And if their opposition could be sustained, the opposition of Saudi Arabia was a different matter, given Egypt's continued dependence on Saudi financial support. The Saudis could not be expected to endorse a separate peace that would be seen throughout much of the Arab world as a betrayal of the Palestinians. Their mounting claim to a position of preeminent leadership in this world alone precluded such an endorsement (not to speak of their need to placate —or bribe—the more radical Arab forces in order to insure the survival of the Saudi dynasty). The Saudis might be expected to adjust to a separate peace if confronted by a *fait accompli* that clearly enjoyed American support, but not otherwise.

It is for these reasons that the position taken by Washington was probably critical in determining the course of events following Sadat's trip to Jerusalem. And while there is no way of detailing with assurance what this position was, its broad outlines are well enough established by this time. Having once recovered from its initial shock, the Carter administration picked up essentially where it had left off in the weeks preceding the dramatic events of November. Although the goal of Geneva obviously had to be abandoned, Washington continued to insist on a comprehensive peace, or what now was its revised version of such a peace. Ac-

* See my article, "The Middle East: For a Separate Peace," COMMENTARY, March 1978.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cordingly, the Sadat initiative would have to be "broadened" in order to enjoy American support, broadened both with respect to the issues addressed in the ensuing negotiations and to the parties involved. The Palestinian problem could not be dealt with merely by a vague statement of principles. A viable plan would have to be developed for the West Bank and Gaza that insured the legitimate rights of the Palestinians by permitting them to participate in the determination of their future. To this end, Jordan must soon be brought into the negotiations. Beyond Jordan, it was desirable, even necessary, to elicit the support of other parties as well—and, above all, Saudi Arabia. American support, the Egyptians were led to understand, was contingent on meeting these conditions. Meeting them, however, meant that whatever prospects there may have been for a separate peace were virtually doomed.

IT WAS in this manner that Washington intervened to support the Sadat initiative. One immediate effect of the intervention was to cause Sadat to raise his effective price for peace with Israel. After all, he could hardly be placed in the position of asking less from Israel than the Carter administration was asking for him. Another effect was to lead Begin to put forward his plan for the West Bank and Gaza and to seek Washington's approval of it. The response of the Carter administration was one of tentative and cautious encouragement. Begin was advised to "repackage" his plan and offer it to Cairo. But Sadat was merely embarrassed by it. The Begin proposal could only have the opposite effect of that intended by its author. It would be seen by the Arab world as the open abandonment of their sacred cause. Its rejection by the Arab states whose support the administration considered essential was guaranteed. Riyadh could have no use for a plan whose acceptance would open the Saudis to the charge of betraying the Palestinians. Hussein ridiculed it as a step backward and declared he had no intention of joining the negotiations. His terms for joining were essentially the terms he had offered the Israelis almost four years earlier. He would take back the West Bank, but without conditions.

Whether a separate peace between Egypt and Israel had ever been a solid prospect remains unclear.* One thing is reasonably clear, however, and that is the effects of Washington's intervention. At a critical juncture, the Carter administration acted as it might have been expected to act. Given the assumptions it entertained, and the policy to which it was strongly committed, it could have no confidence in the Sadat initiative if the intended outcome of that initiative was a separate peace. Administration spokesmen had little reluctance in saying as much at the time. Nor was Washington prepared to pressure any of the third parties whose support was needed to maintain the momentum created by the trip to Jerusalem. Of these parties, Saudi Arabia was by far the most important. But Riyadh viewed the proceedings in Jerusalem and Cairo with thinly veiled hostility, and Washington, respectful as always of the country now considered an American ally and a great force for moderation in the Middle East, applied no pressure. If anything, such pressure as there was appeared to operate in the opposite direction.

In the period since middle January that has followed the breakdown of negotiations, a period in which there has been little if any real movement, an all too familiar pattern has again emerged. Washington has been fully restored to its former position as mediator between the parties. (Sadat has insisted that the United States is more than a mediator, that it must be considered a "full partner" in the negotiations. The administration is not disposed to disagree.) The initial promise of direct negotiations has been abandoned by Sadat in favor of dealing through the Americans, a pattern that means today, as it meant before November, transmitting pressure to Israel through the Americans. Despite occasional pro-forma appeals to the parties to renew direct negotiations, the Carter administration clearly is not unhappy to resume its former role. Direct negotiations between the parties threatens the loss of control, and raises the specter of a settlement which in Washington's view may give rise to even greater instability in the region. That specter momentarily arose last November; it is not to be allowed to arise again.

In other respects as well, the pattern of the recent past is apparent. The one-sided conflicts with Israel have once again followed from Washington's determination to set a number of preconditions for negotiations while nevertheless insisting upon the principle of negotiations without preconditions. And here again Resolution 242 has provided an apparently reasonable basis for doing so, especially as Begin made no small contribution of his own by insisting for a time that the requirement of withdrawal from occupied territories did not of necessity apply to the West Bank and Gaza. That gratuitous, though momentary, insistence apart, the position of Israel is that it is "prepared to negotiate peace treaties in fulfillment of all the principles of the UN Security Council Resolution 242," and that it agrees that these principles "will serve as the basis for negotiations between Israel and all the neighboring states." It is not with this commitment that Washington disagrees but with the Israeli government's continued refusal—*in the absence of direct negotiations*—to go beyond its offer of last December.

The point is significant and worth emphasis. On the general principles that are to govern both negotiations and an eventual peace there remains

* See the article by Steven J. Rosen beginning on p. 46 of this issue—ED.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

very little difference between the two sides. At least this is the case if the statement agreed to by Presidents Sadat and Carter at Aswan in January is taken as the model of such principles. The one point in this statement the Begin government clearly has not as yet agreed to is that "there must be a resolution of the Palestinian problem in all its aspects." But surely it is not beyond the wit of the parties, if they wish to reach an agreement in principle, to compose this difference.*

The real difference that continues to separate Egypt (together with the United States) and Israel is not one of general principles. Nor is it the Sinai, since the Israelis have let it be known that they would not allow the settlements and air bases in the Sinai to stand in the way of an agreement. Instead, it is the insistence—Egyptian and American—that Israel go beyond the Begin plan and that it do so *as a condition* for the renewal of negotiations. How much more beyond? The answer remains obscure. Nor is exploring it important in this context. What is important is the manner in which the "more" will be determined by Washington to be sufficient. Here, at least, the answer seems reasonably clear. The adequacy of Israeli concessions will be determined by the Egyptian response to them. And to the extent the Egyptian response is in turn shaped by others, the adequacy of Israeli concessions rests with those who give vital financial support to Egypt and whose moderation and good will Washington too remains as anxious as ever to insure.

V

THE point was made at the outset that over the past five years, the deepening involvement of this country in the Middle East has had its roots in a declining power and a rising vulnerability. Involvement has responded to the perceived imperatives of policy, but these imperatives have been formed from a sense not of strength but of weakness.

These considerations are crucial to understanding America's Middle East policy since 1973. They explain the fate of the once special relationship with Israel. Before the October war, this relationship expressed the one-sided support the American government was prepared to accord Israel. In Henry Kissinger's hands, the special relationship took on a new dimension that altered its meaning. Now it was used as a means to win Arab confidence and influence by extracting largely unreciprocated concessions from an Israel that had become ever more dependent on this country. Still, in the Kissinger period the support given Israel retained a special significance while the concessions asked from it remained limited. In the period that has followed Kissinger, the special significance of the support given Israel has virtually disappeared, while the concessions asked from it no longer have readily discernible limits. The Carter administration has effectively ended the special relationship. This is the clear meaning of the recent arms package for Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. It is also the meaning of the care the President has taken to characterize each of these states (and Jordan as well) as America's "ally and friend." The transformation in policy begun by Henry Kissinger has thus been carried very far indeed.

* The Israelis have agreed that the Palestinians "will have the right to participate in the determination of their future through talks to take place among Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and the representatives of the Palestinian Arabs." Save for stipulating the parties, this statement of the Begin government parallels the Aswan statement. It is true that the Aswan statement also reads that a resolution of the Palestinian problem "must recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people." But unless these legitimate rights encompass an unrestricted right to self-determination—which was expressly denied by the American government—then the most significant of these rights is precisely that of "enabling the Palestinians to participate in the determination of their future."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Is Peace Still Possible in the Middle East?

The View from Tel Aviv

Walter Laqueur

TEL AVIV. To comment today, and from Israel, on the prospects of peace and war in the Middle East has become a more painful endeavor than at any time in the past. It is easy enough to point to mistakes that have been committed in recent months, infinitely more difficult to point to realistic alternatives. And the task of commenting is made all the harder by the rapidly polarizing climate of opinion both in Israel and in the West, especially the United States.

Many friends of Israel are reluctant to admit even the possibility of error on the part of the Jerusalem government. As for Israel's critics, this is a large company indeed. There are those who may sincerely want to "save Israel in spite of herself"; there are erstwhile supporters who have been waiting for the chance to dissociate themselves from a cause no longer fashionable; and there are still others who would not be greatly perturbed if Israel were to disappear. The last group includes "petro-conservatives" on the one side, radical revolutionists on the other, and—a relatively new phenomenon—some open anti-Semites sniffing for the first time in years the prospect of a fair wind. Most numerous of all the critics, perhaps, are the men and women of good will but impaired vision, aware of current opportunities, oblivious of the pitfalls and dangers.

President Carter, addressing a group of Congressmen, remarked of Menachem Begin that he "had peace within his grasp and he let it get away." But it is one thing to criticize the Begin government for various sins of omission and commission; it is quite another to believe, as Carter seems to do, that "peace" in the Middle East hinges simply on one man and his followers. In the chorus of condemnation, it is all too quickly forgotten that even if the government of Israel were headed by Noam Chomsky, with I.F. Stone as his foreign minister, the Middle East would still be plagued with problems to which no one, except fools and fanatics, has found the answer—and a host of new problems besides.

ANY review of the current state of affairs between Israel and its Arab neighbors has to go back to the Six-Day War of 1967, which, in retrospect, can be seen as the true turning point in Arab-Israeli relations. Before that date there had indeed been, to use the popular Israeli saying of the time, "nothing to talk about." The Arab governments were unwilling to accept Israel within its then-borders. The moderates among them were, at most, willing to consider a return to the original UN partition plan of 1947; the less moderate, who were the majority, advocated the destruction of the Jewish state. After the Six-Day War, however, Jerusalem was for the first time in a position to make moves which might have brought about some Arab acceptance of Israel's legitimacy; for reasons that are all too understandable, Israel did not make the most of these opportunities.

True, from time to time there were concrete Israeli initiatives—such as Moshe Dayan's plan of August 1972, aimed at giving up half of the Sinai; or the Allon plan, which envisaged autonomy for the West Bank, provided the Jordan River remained Israel's security border; or the Labor Alignment resolution of December 1973 in which a Palestinian identity was recognized for the first time. Yet no real action was taken along any of these lines, and in the meantime Israel adopted a negative attitude toward the various peace initiatives of the U.S. and the United Nations. Again, it is easy to see why: among the Arab governments there was still no apparent willingness to accept Israel regardless of any concessions it might make. This was most clear in the threefold resolution of the Khartoum conference, held shortly after the end of the Six-Day War: no negotiations, no recognition, no peace. While Nasser was riding high on the wave of radical pan-Arabism, the prospects of even a limited arrangement were virtually nil.

WALTER LAQUEUR, whose many books include *Terrorism* and *The Middle East in World Politics*, is chairman of the Research Council of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington and a contributing editor of COMMENTARY.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And after Nasser's death, those opposed to the recognition of Israel still carried the day; the Rabat conference (October 1974) proclaimed the PLO as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and the PLO stood for the destruction of the "Zionist entity."

Thus, there seemed at the time no alternative to official Israeli policy. Yet the dangers of that immobilism were nonetheless real, and costly. It was, for instance, largely as the result of Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza that the PLO, now the main stumbling block on the road to any settlement, became a major political force. Inside Israel, an unwillingness grew to give up the conquered "territories." (It ought to be recalled that before 1967 there was no irredentist party in Israel, and that not even Herut, let alone the religious parties, ever proposed the conquest of "Judea and Samaria.") The idea that these regions should not be given back was never part of official policy, but the longer the occupation lasted, the more difficult it became even to envisage that they should one day be surrendered. This also meant that the Jewish state was saddled with a very substantial minority of reluctant inhabitants, and one which, given demographic trends, could well turn into a majority in the not too distant future—with grave consequences for both the Jewish and the democratic character of the Jewish state.*

Whatever the mitigating circumstances, a price had to be paid for the lack of initiative on the part of successive Israeli governments, and that price was the Yom Kippur War. It is, in fact, possible that the 1973 conflict could have been averted had Israel made far-reaching concessions to Egypt along the lines of the Dayan plan of 1972. This would not have resulted in a formal treaty, but it would have removed the inducement for Egypt to go to war; and without Egypt, the other Arab states would not have attacked. It is true that Israel's concessions would have had to be unilateral, but they would have been made from a position of strength. Unfortunately, there was a fixation within Israel on a formal peace, with all its trappings—trade, tourism, and the exchange of ambassadors—and in the absence of Arab readiness to reciprocate, this fixation was allowed to dominate political thinking. As a result, the depth of the hostility toward Israel in some of the Arab states was overrated, and the fact was ignored that the Arabs faced problems other than Israel, and that their relations among themselves were anything but cordial. Israeli foreign policy, in short, made no use of existing opportunities but followed the line of least domestic resistance. The shock of the Yom Kippur War showed that its assumptions had been mistaken.

II

To dwell on lost opportunities may seem of little topical relevance. Certainly, the situation now is quite different from what it was six years ago. But if circumstances have changed, underlying political attitudes are more or less the same, despite the coming to power of a new government in Israel in 1977.

The reasons for Menachem Begin's victory in last year's elections to the Knesset are not to be sought in a sudden conversion of the electorate to the domestic and foreign-policy program of the Herut party. The reasons are more prosaic, having to do with the scandals, or alleged scandals, affecting some leading members of Mapai, and above all with the general feeling that one party had been in power for too long. In fact, foreign-policy issues played scarcely any role at all in the election results. True, the National Religious party had veered to the Right in recent years, but the Liberals, who were Herut's partner in the Likud coalition, advocated a rather moderate foreign policy and so, emphatically, did the Democratic Movement for Change, another partner in the new coalition, consisting mainly of former members or sympathizers of Mapai. Still, however heterogeneous the composition of the Likud coalition, there was no doubt from the first moment that Begin would impose on it his own foreign policy.

Begin had been a key figure in Israeli politics from the very beginning, yet little was known about him outside a small circle of friends and admirers. He led a quiet life, he was not a prolific writer, and his speeches in the Knesset usually dealt with matters of current concern and were not meant to provide inspirational guidance. (It is perhaps significant that the only collection of Begin's speeches at present available is the one in Arabic published by the PLO head office in Beirut.) His personality provoked sharply divergent reactions. His friends and admirers maintained that he was a political genius. Others took a less sanguine view. Ben-Gurion, himself no dove, always regarded Begin as the most dangerous man in Israeli politics, a "fascist," who, if he came to power, would bring about Israel's destruction through a reckless and adventurist foreign policy.

It is true that in the past Begin was given to outbursts of wild demagoguery. But he was not, and is not, a fascist, and he did not aim at establishing a dictatorship. In the 1950's he organized a famous campaign in the Knesset to defeat the reparations agreements with Germany, but in the end, despite his dire threats, he did not go underground or unleash a "civil war." On the contrary, he mellowed into a stalwart of democratic rule,

* The demographic problem facing Israel is briefly as follows: within the pre-1967 borders there now live 3 million Jews and about 600,000 Arabs (17 per cent). If we add those living on the West Bank and in Gaza, the total number of Arabs amounts to 1.7 million (36 per cent). The growth rate of the Jewish population is 1.75 per cent, that of Israeli Arabs is 4 per cent; the rate is 3.75 per cent on the West Bank and Gaza. Projections show that in thirty years, or less, there will be more Arabs than Jews in the areas at present under Israeli control. It is likely that the Arab birth rate will decline, but such changes usually take place over longer periods.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

taking an inordinate pride in his intimate knowledge of the intricacies of parliamentary procedure.

The main formative influence on Begin is Zev Jabotinsky, leader of the Revisionist movement within Zionism. But there are some important differences between the two men. Jabotinsky was essentially a 19th-century romantic liberal, in the tradition of Mazzini, and he had nothing but contempt for religious "obscurantism." Zionist society, as envisaged by Jabotinsky, was to be liberal, not clerical. Begin, by contrast, has systematically cultivated Orthodox rabbis, and not just for tactical reasons—it is said that even now those who combine Orthodoxy with a belief in the "Land of Israel" concept are the only people to whom he is willing to lend an ear. Jabotinsky, to take another point of contrast, never denied the existence of a Palestinian-Arab people; in a series of articles in the 1920's he made clear his belief that there was indeed such a people, proud of its traditions, eager for national independence. But it was Jabotinsky's view that since the Arabs already had so many states of their own, whereas the Jews had none, elementary justice demanded that the claim of the Jews be honored before that of the Palestinians. Begin, on the other hand, has denied the existence of a Palestinian Arab people with an identity of its own.

Yet for all his single-mindedness, Begin too is in the tradition of 19th-century integral nationalism —a tradition that puts the interests of the nation above all other considerations, but that is also democratic in inspiration. (Begin has shown more politeness, even friendliness, to allies and enemies alike than almost any other leading figure in Israeli politics in recent memory.) Like Churchill and de Gaulle, Begin believes that a head of government should be free to concentrate on foreign policy and defense, and that domestic issues can safely be left to the experts. In an age of pragmatism, Begin is a man of firm, deep, and sincerely held convictions, including the conviction that the whole historical Jewish homeland belongs to the people of Israel by right.

Unfortunately, none of this—neither his intellectual and ideological background nor his three decades in parliament as the main spokesman of the opposition—really prepared Begin for his responsibilities as head of a government coalition. And what is worse, there was no one to initiate him into the realities of world politics and power. Over the years Herut had undergone successive splits and purges, and many of those who had shown any inclination toward independent thought had left the party. Intellectuals were never strongly represented in Jabotinsky's movement, and the same was true with regard to Herut. There was a sprinkling of scientists, technicians, lawyers, and journalists, men and women of accomplishment in their own fields but with no specific competence or knowledge in politics. And so when he became Prime Minister, Begin assembled around him a group of young people who are vaguely reminiscent of the aides who entered the White House, the National Security Council, and the State Department after President Carter's election. These are people who might acquit themselves creditably as managers of a chain of supermarkets, as professors, or as partners in a law firm, but who have suddenly found themselves in positions of power and influence well beyond their capabilities.

Their influence, to be sure, does not extend to the Prime Minister himself, who has not been open to persuasion except perhaps on a tactical level. When confronted with unpleasant facts and figures, Begin likes to maintain that he is by nature an optimist. A true exchange of opinions is hardly possible in these conditions. Begin's interlocutors are tempted to gloss over differences rather than go over the same ground for the second or third time, and this, in turn, creates the mistaken impression, as far as Begin is concerned, that his own arguments have prevailed. For the Prime Minister is a great believer in the power of the spoken word. His legal training in Poland seems to have persuaded him that, in politics as in jurisprudence, arguments are of paramount importance; he also tends to attribute enormous significance to legal formulations in the conduct of foreign policy. This is not just a matter of style; Begin's approach has had a decisive impact on the negotiations in Ismailia and Washington.

III

DESPITE his reputation for inflexibility, it appeared at first that Begin was actually willing to make more far-reaching concessions in his search for peace than any previous Israeli leader. Even before President Sadat's mission to Jerusalem, he made it known that he would consider a general peace settlement. On September 11, 1977, the Israeli cabinet approved the text of a proposed treaty between Israel and the Arab states on just these lines.

Nor has the whole history of Sadat's visit to Jerusalem on November 19 yet been told; once all the details are published, Begin may well emerge with more credit for the early stages of the talks than has so far been given him. There were, in fact, several preparatory meetings, ranging in location from Tangier to Teheran, and details of the statements made "independently" in Jerusalem by the two leaders were closely coordinated, including even Begin's remark that he preferred a general peace settlement to a separate treaty with Egypt. Sadat's later statement to an interviewer —"I gave him everything, he gave me nothing"—is quite untrue. The fact that Begin did not accept a total withdrawal to the June 1967 lines, and rejected the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, could not have come as a surprise to Sadat in November. All this has been made clear by Foreign Minister Dayan in his preliminary meetings with various Arab leaders, and it had

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

been stated publicly by Begin a week before Sadat's visit.

What, then, went wrong during the weeks after the meetings in Jerusalem? When Sadat and Begin met in Ismailia on December 24, 1977, they failed to agree on a "declaration of agreement on principles" because of differences over the Palestinian problem. By January 14, Sadat announced that he had "absolutely no hope" that anything would be achieved at the forthcoming meeting of the political committee in Jerusalem, and he did in fact recall his delegation four days later, accusing Israel of proposing mere "partial solutions."

Various theories, many of them quite far-fetched, have been propounded to explain the breakdown. Some argue that the reason Sadat went to Jerusalem in the first place was that he feared an impending Israeli military attack, and that he drew back the moment he realized no such attack had been contemplated. Others claim that Sadat was acting in bad faith from the beginning, that his visit was a clever tactical move aimed at driving a wedge between Israel and the United States.

These explanations are not really convincing. There is every reason to believe that Sadat's initiative was genuine. Egypt, after all, had borne the brunt of the Arab struggle for three decades, had sacrificed more than anyone else, and was truly inclined now to bury the hatchet with Israel. Sadat's initiative was based on the assumption that Begin was a stronger political leader than his predecessors, that he could make concessions which they could not have made. This assumption was at least partly correct, for Israeli foreign policy under Golda Meir, Yitzhak Rabin, and Shimon Peres had indeed been paralyzed—not least because the Labor leaders were afraid of Begin. And there may have been other factors behind the Sadat visit. United States policy-makers, in one of their periodic fits of lunacy, had approached the Russians in September 1977 with a view toward giving them a greater share in the Middle East peacemaking process, and in October the two superpowers signed a joint statement that harked back to a similarly ill-starred initiative undertaken by Secretary Rogers in 1970. Sadat clearly wanted no part of harebrained schemes of this kind. It was better, despite the risks involved, to talk directly to the Israelis.

SADAT had two demands as a precondition for peace: Israeli evacuation of Sinai, and agreement on some formula regarding the future of the Palestinians. It is true that, after his visit to Jerusalem, Sadat's position hardened on some issues—he began, for instance, to insist on Jordanian participation in the talks. Perhaps he had started to feel the pressure of the radicals in the Arab camp, perhaps he hoped that America would force Israel to make greater concessions. But Jordanian participation was apparently not an absolute for Sadat, and there are grounds for thinking that but for the vacillation of the Israeli government on some issues, and the amateurish way in which the negotiations were handled, the original momentum of the peace initiative could have been preserved.

To Sadat's now somewhat hardened position, Begin responded in Ismailia with a detailed 26-point plan for the inhabitants of the West Bank, which was bound to create friction precisely because it spelled out what should have remained vague, at least for the moment. Far from clarifying the issues, these proposals provoked endless semantic discussions over the meaning of autonomy, self-rule, limited self-rule, and other such terms. Lawyers stepped in where politicians had feared to tread, and from that moment the talks entered a cul-de-sac.

But this was not the only stumbling block. While the negotiations were going on, General Sharon, Israel's Minister of Agriculture, gave a green light to those Israelis who wanted to establish new settlements in Sinai, and Begin declared that these settlements would not be given up and were to be protected for all time by the Israeli army. The Prime Minister also offered a new interpretation of UN Resolution 242, claiming that it did not necessarily apply to the West Bank. This interpretation was not only rejected by every government in the world, it also differed from the interpretation provided by all previous Israeli governments, including Begin's own (joint U.S.-Israeli declaration of October 5, 1977). In April 1978, this reinterpretation of Resolution 242 was again reinterpreted in a more moderate, or in any case, more obscure way, but by then the damage had been done.

The impression was thus created among Israel's friends and enemies alike that the Likud government was not really interested in pursuing the peace initiative. True, Begin continued to claim that "everything was negotiable except the destruction of Israel." But this formula, which encountered disbelief even inside Israel, was naturally given little credence elsewhere. In fact, although Begin did want peace, and although he was aware that he faced a unique political opportunity, he was not clear in his own mind what price he could afford to pay for it in the way of concessions.

Begin's misgivings in this regard were reinforced by attacks against him at home, which began almost immediately after the Jerusalem meeting. The main attack emanated from the "Rejection Front," comprising most of Herut, most of the Le'am ("For the Nation") faction, Gush Emunim ("Bloc of the Faithful"), and the Greater Israel group. They based their opposition to possible concessions on the West Bank not on considerations of security but on the belief—to which Begin also subscribes—that Judea and Samaria are the historical homeland of the Jewish people and should under no circumstances be given up. And they were almost equally reluctant to make conces-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sions in the Sinai, because they did not believe that the essential Arab hostility to Israel had changed or that the Arabs had ceased to aim at Israel's destruction.

There was also criticism from certain circles in the Labor Alignment. Some, indeed, tried to outflank Begin on the Right; others, willing to make concessions on the West Bank, were not so willing to do so in Sinai, and pointed to the undeniable military importance of the airfields there; lastly, there were those (in the "agricultural-military complex," as one unkind critic put it) who had a vested interest in preserving the status quo because of the extensive use they had been making of relatively cheap Arab labor.

THE settlements were perhaps not the most important bone of contention, but they caused the greatest opposition inside Israel and created the most political damage abroad. The basic facts are these: since 1967, 76 settlements have been established beyond the "Green Line," with some 6,500 inhabitants. They are located in the Golan, the Jordan Valley, in Judea and Samaria, in the Rafiah region, and in the Sinai. Most were set up openly, with the permission and support of the Labor and/or Likud governments; others were established semi-legally, as temporary work camps, or within army bases. And a few, connected with Gush Emunim, were founded against the express wish of the authorities. Successive Israeli governments have closed their eyes to these last settlements, while demanding on occasion that they be evacuated.

The purpose of the settlements has never been made altogether clear. It might be argued abstractly that Jews do have the right to settle wherever they want in historic Palestine (and perhaps also in Transjordan). But given political and military realities, as well as the small number of people in Israel willing to join any new agricultural settlement, it is still hard to understand why priority should have been given for a decade to settlement beyond the Green Line. For during this same period, only 2,000 settlers have pitched their tents *inside* the 1967 borders, despite the fact that there is sufficient land and that unless new settlements are soon established, Western Galilee will have an Arab majority. From a military point of view, the settlements are of no value; on the contrary, they are likely to hinder operations in a time of war. Economically, many of them are not viable, in view of the high cost of water and the poor quality of the soil.

The problem with most of the settlements is not that they are illegal, as claimed by Secretary of State Vance, but that, with notable exceptions, they have been a waste of people and resources which are in short supply. The Gush Emunim settlements, in particular, are little more than Potemkin Villages. Of the few families living in them, some regard their presence as a political demonstration and have no wish to settle permanently, while others continue to work in Israel but return to the settlements for nights and weekends.

That the settlements were ever allowed to become a major political issue is in a way unforgivable. But a major issue they did become. Ezer Weizman, Minister of Defense, and not known as a dove, told the Prime Minister in a stormy telephone conversation from the United States early this year that he would resign if "one more bulldozer moved in the Sinai." There were other voices of warning from within the government coalition, too, until it was finally decided to freeze construction of new settlements in the Sinai for the time being but to continue to expand existing ones, with Begin again emphasizing that no settlement would be surrendered in the framework of a peace treaty.

And so the stage was set for Begin's disastrous visit to the United States last March. In early private meetings with Senator Henry Jackson and former Secretary of State Kissinger, Begin expressed dismay that the plan which he had submitted to President Carter in December, and which had been (he thought) approved by the President, was subsequently rejected. Carter, for his part, claimed that he had thought Begin's plan merely a preliminary negotiating position, not a rock-hard stance. He complained that the Israelis had taken a slight nod of the head for a ringing endorsement. At the end of the meetings, Carter listed Begin's "no's," which, in addition to the issue of the settlements, all concerned the meaning and scope of Resolution 242. Begin, according to Carter, had refused to commit himself to withdrawing from any portion of the West Bank or the Gaza Strip at any time, irrespective of security arrangements that might be included as part of an agreement. He had rejected the American proposal for a limited-choice referendum on the West Bank and Gaza Strip following a five-year transition period. And he had refused to acknowledge the legitimate rights of the Palestinians because, he claimed, this would lead eventually to an independent Palestinian state threatening Israel's heartland.

PRESIDENT CARTER's summary of Begin's position, while unfairly stressing the negative, was basically correct. A glum Begin returned to Israel, and the dispatch of Weizman to Cairo on March 31 did nothing to remedy the situation. Weizman had gotten along considerably better on a personal level with Sadat and the other Egyptian leaders than had Begin and Dayan, but this time his reception was brusque, even unfriendly. As for Begin, upon his return he received an overwhelming vote of confidence in the Knesset. But even among those who expressed their confidence in him, there were many who felt great unease about the record of his government.

They were uneasy about more than foreign policy. When the Likud assumed power, it had been widely believed that at long last Israel had a gov-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ernment with a strong sense of purpose. It was expected that an end would come to the strikes which had paralyzed the economy, that bureaucratic interference would be reduced and incompetence stamped out, that a stop would be put to the chronic overspending which had resulted in an inflation rate of 40 per cent. And indeed the new government did take some daring steps during its first months. The pound was floated, most exchange controls were abolished, and there were massive cuts in subsidies. Simha Ehrlich, the new finance minister, did sincerely try to reduce spending and balance the budget. But after a short time he found himself confronting the same pressures his predecessors had faced, and he was not notably more successful in dealing with them. During the winter and spring, strikes spread throughout the public sector, and while the government held out in some instances, more often it had to give in to wage demands. Hoped-for investments from abroad failed to materialize. In short, after a promising beginning, the Likud government came to look no different from what had come before.

Even more disconcerting was the political disarray within the coalition. Ezer Weizman quarreled with both the Prime Minister and General Sharon; Moshe Dayan, who had some of the qualities needed by a foreign minister but lacked others, was bitterly attacked by Moshe Arens, the new head of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Security Committee, and an expert in aircraft technology rather than in world affairs. Shmuel Katz, an old Herut stalwart who had been made special adviser on information, resigned from the government and frontally attacked Begin, Weizman, and Dayan. In this he was joined by other influential Herut supporters and new converts like Moshe Shamir, the novelist, who demanded Dayan's resignation.

By the end of the first year, the Liberals, one element in the coalition, were manifesting distinct unhappiness. The Democratic Movement for Change, another element, found itself in a state of disintegration. There were many resignations, and of the remaining party, half was in favor of staying in the government while the other half pressed to dissolve the partnership. As for Labor, it had yet to recover from its 1977 defeat or to constitute itself as any sort of alternative in political life. And meanwhile, outside the traditional political structure, a new movement came into being, "Peace Now," led by army reserve officers who questioned Begin's policy vis-à-vis Sadat and announced that peace without settlements beyond the Green Line was preferable to settlements without peace.

This was the situation in April. Begin again visited Washington in early May, when the atmosphere seemed friendlier and the differences between the Carter administration and the Israeli line seemed to have narrowed down considerably. It was made clear that according to the American blueprint, Israel would be able to retain military outposts on the West Bank during the interim period and beyond, and that a permanent settlement there would be based substantially upon the home-rule proposal put forward by Begin.

Yet if there was some advance in this direction, there were setbacks in another context. The package-deal sale of fighter planes to Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia was an issue which Israel could not win, and the political defeat was only aggravated by the disproportionate significance that was attached to it. Still, the implications of that defeat for the future are ominous, and the same may be said of the open dissent now being voiced in Israel and among American Jews over Israeli policy. Israel can ill afford a "second front" at this time, and Israel's enemies will be only too eager to publicize these critical voices. But the dissent should be taken seriously, for it reflects the erosion of an earlier consensus. That consensus existed so long as Israeli foreign and defense policy was based on the legitimate security interests of the state. Once an attempt was made to shift the emphasis, to base foreign policy on, in effect, the platform of a single political party, polarization in public opinion became inevitable. That Begin is not a consensus politician has always been one of the main sources of his political strength. But at the same time it is this which jeopardizes the Israeli position at a time when unity is needed more than ever before.

IV

For a few weeks in November and December 1977, there was a chance for an agreement between Israel and Egypt. Once the settlements became a bone of contention, once legal formulations became as important as matters of substance, the opportunity receded. Sadat reverted to his old demand that Israel withdraw from *all* territories, and Begin went back to quoting Scripture.

Today, it is still the case that a separate peace with Egypt is the most desirable of outcomes. There is, of course, no certainty that such an agreement with Egypt would hold. Sadat could suddenly disappear from the political scene, and a more radical or aggressively pan-Arab leadership might take over in Cairo. Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai would involve palpable risks. But the conduct of policy always involves risks, and in this case the risks are not that formidable. There was, and is, a great deal of support in Egypt for a settlement with Israel, and a great deal of discontent with the other Arab countries whose solidarity with Egypt has been mostly of the verbal kind. Sadat's successor could fairly be counted on to take a line similar to his, and to put Egypt's national interest before that of the Arab "cause."

A successful outcome to the negotiations with Egypt would remove the prospect of war in the Middle East, and would strengthen Israel's position both in the Middle East and in the world at large. Whether it would lead to a settlement on the West Bank is far less certain. It is Begin's mis-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fortune to have become Prime Minister precisely at a time when the hard choices more or less successfully postponed by his predecessors were at last put on the historical agenda. And it has to be said that even if Begin were to demonstrate all the qualities of a Richelieu, a Disraeli, or a Bismarck, even if he had at his disposal the best advisers and assistants in the world, even if his course of action were not dictated by the dead hand of the past (or the voice of Scripture), it is difficult to see how he could resolve the problem of two peoples claiming the same land.

It has been said in Washington that no one really expects Israel to withdraw from the whole of the West Bank and Gaza, and no one really expects that an independent Palestinian state will be set up. According to the various schemes that have been proposed in recent years, the West Bank and Gaza would be demilitarized; Israel would not claim sovereignty over the area but would merely retain some defensive outposts; self-rule would be granted to the Palestinian Arabs under the tutelage of Israel, Jordan, and, if necessary, Egypt. But would Palestinian Arabs accept a scheme of this kind, which would leave them with less territory than a West Bank-Gaza mini-state, with no control over defense or foreign policy, with their citizenship determined by Jordan, a country only slightly less resented than Israel? It seems unlikely in the extreme. The Palestinians are told that these schemes should be considered provisional; after five years there would be free elections in which they would have the right to decide freely their own future. If true, this would be a sensational new experiment—the first free elections for a very long time anywhere in the Arab world.

Anyway, this plan is opposed by the Israeli government because it would be nothing but a roundabout road toward the establishment of an independent state run by the PLO, a solution opposed by virtually all Israelis for reasons which have nothing to do with the theological beliefs of Begin and Gush Emunim. It is all very well to argue that under the American plan the Palestinians would be part of Jordan; what would prevent them from taking over and radicalizing a country in which they would constitute the majority? And Jordan, too, has so far shown no willingness to be party to a deal of this kind. Hussein already has too many Palestinians in his kingdom, and his past experience with them has been none too happy.

To break the deadlock, the idea has been broached of American guarantees for Israel and some Arab countries, with the overall aim of a regional nonaggression pact. The United States, according to this blueprint, would have an air base in Sinai and a naval base at Jaffa or Haifa, and would in turn enter into specific treaty obligations with regard to the territorial integrity of the countries involved. But there is little enthusiasm for any such plan in Israel and Egypt, even if one takes for granted congressional approval and an American ability or willingness to live up to such a commitment five or ten years hence, in an area much closer to the Soviet Union than to the United States. Given the reluctance of the present administration to match the continuing Soviet military build-up, the question arises of how much any U.S. guarantee is likely to be worth in the 1980's. There would, in addition, be the greatest reluctance in Egypt to accept any scheme that smacks of 19th-century "capitulations." It took the Egyptians a long time to get rid of their British bases; they would be unlikely to welcome new ones. Nor would such bases be welcomed in Israel; psychological considerations apart, it is not at all clear what security they would provide. They might be of help against a full-scale attack, but they would be of no use against missiles fired into Tel Aviv or Ben-Gurion airport, operations sufficient to cause grave dislocation but not sufficient to invoke the treaty obligations. Not that the idea of a base or a defense treaty should be dismissed out of hand; but it is an idea which would make sense only as one component of a general settlement, if acceptable to all concerned.

WHAT, then, is to be done about the West Bank? The hard truth is that there is no fully satisfactory solution, only a choice among various evils. Begin has said that everything is open to discussion except the destruction of Israel; this means, necessarily, that annexation of the West Bank by Israel is ruled out. And since Israel cannot occupy the West Bank indefinitely without clarifying its status, this in turn means that what must be envisaged is some form of autonomy and, indeed, independence.

According to some observers, the PLO has changed over the last year or two and become more moderate; according to others, it has been weakened through internal splits. But in its new program (March 1977) the Palestinian National Council made no attempt to modify the provisions of its charter, which are incompatible with the continued existence of Israel, and it rejected Resolution 242. Meeting again in August 1977, it failed to pass even a modified version of Resolution 242. Ever since Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, it has been the prime mover against Egyptian "treachery" and for the establishment of an "Arab Confrontation and Resistance Front."

Not too much importance, perhaps, should be attributed to the PLO's public announcements. Even an endorsement of Resolution 242 could be a mere tactical move, or perhaps signify the temporary victory of a moderate faction. The decisive test is not what the Palestinians say about recognizing Israel, but what they do. Nor is it of paramount importance what *kind* of constitutional arrangement would be made for a Palestinian Arab state. The military danger it would present can be reduced not by constitutional guarantees but only by a security pact—for instance, a treaty of friendship, cooperation, and mutual assistance between it and Israel similar to that concluded between Po-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

land (1956) or Hungary (1957) and the Soviet Union. According to those treaties, the temporary presence of Soviet troops does not affect Polish or Hungarian sovereignty and does not lead to interference in the domestic affairs of the countries concerned; no Soviet troop movements outside specified areas are permitted without the authorization of the local government. It goes without saying that the treaties preclude the establishment of any third-party military bases or the presence of any foreign troops.

An independent Palestinian entity would obviously entail serious dangers, and not just for Israel. It is possible that the Palestinians, if given a mini-state of this kind, would start fighting each other—as the Irish did after gaining independence in 1921. Although some Arab countries would lose interest in the Palestinian cause once there was a state, others would certainly be tempted to intervene, and the result could be a new Lebanon on a larger scale; again the Irish precedent is anything but encouraging. And how could one reasonably expect the Soviet Union to pass up the opportunity to acquire an ideal base of operations, extending help to a defenseless state in need of a strong protector? In short, the prospects that a state of this kind would constitute a permanent irredentist force are greater than the chances of peaceful coexistence. For all these reasons, it is most unlikely that any Israeli government would accept the establishment of a Palestinian state unless it had guarantees reducing the dangers to a minimum. And the only effective guarantee one can envision at present is a long-term military presence.

But it should not be forgotten that if a Palestinian state would create dangers for Israel, such a state would itself be in an exposed position. If it engaged in military adventures against Israel, it would suffer at least as much as southern Lebanon has. Colonel Qaddafi of Libya recently told a German correspondent that Israel could not possibly permit the establishment of a Palestinian entity because it would mean the beginning of the end of the Jewish state. It may not have occurred to Qaddafi that attacks against Israel would also be perilous indeed for such an entity.

Recently the PLO has drawn much closer to the Soviet Union, but this rapprochement has also isolated the PLO, for many Arab countries have become increasingly apprehensive about Soviet intentions in the Middle East; events in Africa have shown that the Soviet Union now feels strong enough to engage in military intervention by proxy. The attitude of Saudi Arabia toward Israel is anything but friendly, but Saudi Arabia does not feel threatened by Israel; it *would* feel threatened by an irredentist Palestinian state representing Soviet interests in the Middle East. The same refers to Egypt and even the United States. To survive in a hostile climate, a Palestinian Arab state would have to be on its best behavior. One should not underrate the political intelligence and the instinct for self-preservation of the Palestinians, including perhaps the PLO.

All this is not to minimize the dangers involved in granting even limited autonomy to the West Bank. Why, then, should it be tried? Because there is no other way, and it should be done from a position of strength rather than weakness; the errors of omission between 1967 and 1973 should not be repeated. Because the demographic factor, the presence of a million Arabs, cannot be forever ignored; because for a majority of Israelis, national security, and not the voice of Scripture, is the decisive consideration as far as borders are concerned; because the national security of a small country depends not only on territories but on a great many other things, including some measure of foreign support; and because Israel, unlike China, cannot withdraw into total isolation and defy the rest of the world. General Eitan, the new Chief of Staff, recently claimed that Israel cannot be defended without the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan Heights. Most of his predecessors seem not to agree with him. And in any event, provisions for the defense of Israel will have to be made irrespective of whatever political solution may be arrived at; what is more to the point than territories, Israel cannot be defended without a steady supply of modern weapons systems—systems which are not produced in Israel.

It is one of the ironies of history that Israel may one day have to grant to the Palestinian Arabs the very autonomy which the Arab governments refused to give them between 1948 and 1967. From that stage on, it will be up to the Palestinians themselves to decide whether the experiment leads to some form of uneasy coexistence or to further bloodshed ending possibly in the destruction of their homeland.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Is Peace Still Possible in the Middle East?

The Egyptian Perspective

Bernard Lewis

SINCE the war of October 1973, Egypt's President Sadat has increasingly thrown in his lot with the United States. His westward reorientation of Egyptian policy seems to have been supported and, indeed, anticipated by the greater part of articulate Egyptian opinion.

This was not of course unanimous. There were some elements that opposed or at least criticized the change. One was the comparatively small group of active and militant leftists. Another, somewhat larger, consisted of those who, without necessarily being either pro-Russian or anti-Western, nevertheless felt that it was a mistake for the government of Egypt to limit its options and commit itself entirely to one side, thereby depriving itself of the freedom of maneuver which had been used with such skill—and, some might say, with such disastrous results—by the late President Nasser. Some opposed the new policy because of commitment to the Arab cause; others, again, because of a profound mistrust of the ultimate intentions of Israel.

On the whole, however, these were all minority views. Dissatisfaction with the Russians was widespread, and Sadat's turn to the West had already proved its value in the later stages of the October war and in the diplomatic aftermath. Most Egyptians were therefore willing to support it.

Since then it is mainly because of the recognition of his search for peace that Sadat has been able to enjoy to an increasing extent the respect and support of his people. Even when opposition groups taking advantage of their new-found freedom sought to challenge his leadership, they directed their main attack against his economic and other domestic policies, not against his pursuit of peace. (The burden of leftist criticism, for example, was not that the peace policy was misguided or even unsuccessful, but that it would not solve Egypt's economic problems.) The Egyptian mood has for some time been very clear, and there is little doubt that in seeking a settlement with Israel, Sadat was not leading but following the Egyptian people and giving expression to a desire which had existed and had been growing in strength for a long time. To this policy, Sadat himself was a comparatively late convert. He has, however, shown himself to be genuinely aware of the needs and wishes of his people and of the fact that these needs and wishes coincide.

Several factors and considerations might have impelled Sadat to pursue such a policy. One was the danger of a stalemate, which would almost certainly lead sooner or later to a resumption of hostilities and to new military dangers. It is now commonly claimed in Egypt, and to a lesser extent in other Arab countries, that the war of October 1973 was an Egyptian victory. It was certainly a military victory in its beginnings and a political victory in its results, and the Egyptians are anxious not to endanger either the satisfactions of the one or the benefits of the other. There is also a further and perhaps in the long run more important consideration—a growing awareness of the extremely fragile nature of the social, economic, and political order in most Arab countries. These countries have gone through great and convulsive social changes, and the existing order in virtually all of them is precarious and could easily be overthrown. In this respect, the civil war in Lebanon has served as a terrible warning.

Another obvious reason is war weariness—the exhaustion of the country after thirty years' drain of blood and treasure. The increase in population on the one hand and the decay and sometimes the collapse of public services and amenities on the other have made more and more Egyptians acutely aware of the strains which the long-drawn-out war has imposed on them and of the price which they have paid and are continuing to pay for it. There

BERNARD LEWIS is Cleveland E. Dodge Professor of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University and a long-term member of the Institute for Advanced Study. Among his many works are *The Arabs in History, The Middle East and the West,* and *History—Remembered, Recovered, and Invented.* Mr. Lewis is also the editor of *Islam and the Arab World* and co-editor of *The Cambridge History of Islam* and *The Encyclopedia of Islam.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was a time when in Egypt as in all Arab countries it would have been difficult or impossible to argue for an end to the struggle. Today the Egyptians need to be persuaded to continue the struggle—and the arguments are losing their force.

Yet another reason behind the search for peace is fear of the Russians. The Egyptians have already had their taste of Russian involvement in their own affairs and of the methods and purposes of Soviet policies. I recall, not long after the October war, chatting with an Egyptian friend in Cairo and remarking to him that one of the important results of the war was to reveal to both sides, the Israelis and the Egyptians, the degree of their dependence on their superpower patrons. He agreed, and remarked that in this respect the Israelis were much better placed than the Egyptians. "Why?" I asked. "To be dependent on the United States," he said, "is something one can live with; but to be dependent on the Russians, that is real trouble."

In this remark he was expressing a point of view which had become increasingly current in Egypt at the time. There was a growing awareness that a relationship of dependence on the Soviet Union was uncomfortable and dangerous, while a relationship of dependence on the United States, though perhaps awkward in some respects, was not entirely disagreeable. There was also a dawning awareness that it was the United States and not the Soviet Union which possessed at least some measure of ability to influence the course of events in the Middle East.

More recently, there have been alarming signs of a Russian return. Though their influence in Egypt has been greatly reduced and is now limited to some supply of spare parts for weaponry, the Soviets appear to be approaching again from the west—where, against all predictions, they succeeded in establishing themselves in Qaddafi's Libya—and, even more alarmingly, from the south, where the growing Russian presence in the Horn of Africa and elsewhere constitutes a new and terrifying threat. The government of the Sudan is friendly to Egypt, but is not one of the more secure regimes of the Arab world. It is opposed by a strong Communist opposition within the country as well as by gathering forces beyond its southern borders. A coup in the Sudan—always a possibility—would leave Egypt threatened from the south and the west as well as from the east.

It has also become clear that the Russians have no great interest in peace in the Middle East. Indeed, the Soviet Union is the only major power with a vested interest in the continuance of conflict. If Egypt, either alone or with other Arab states, is to continue a policy of unremitting hostility and war against Israel, there is only one great power on which it can count for help. That one power is the Soviet Union, and this fact alone is a strong argument, in the eyes of many Egyptians, against the pursuit of such a policy.

Another factor of considerable importance to the government and, perhaps still more, to the people of Egypt is disillusionment with Arabism. As far back as 1948, when King Farouk decided to send the Egyptian army into Palestine, there were divided opinions in Egypt on the wisdom of this act. Ismail Sidqi Pasha, a prominent Egyptian statesman of the time, urged the King not to get into a quarrel which was not Egypt's, and warned him of the long and dangerous involvement which would follow. Sidqi's advice was rejected, and he was execrated and denounced as an imperialist stooge, a Zionist agent, and a traitor. He died in 1950, a sick and broken man. Today, more than one voice is heard in Egypt recalling the memory of Ismail Sidqi and regretting that his advice, which might have saved Egypt from a long, useless, and exhausting struggle, was not followed. Egyptians are acutely aware that it is they who have borne the main brunt of the struggle with Israel, fighting in all the wars and paying an exorbitant bill in lives and resources. Egyptian leaders willingly played this role and the Egyptian people accepted the necessary sacrifices for almost three decades. Both leaders and people are tired of it now, and have begun to compare their own contribution with the relative inactivity and, as they see it, the niggardly financial support of their Arab brothers. Arabs from other countries often say that during those three decades the Egyptians were not sacrificing themselves for the Palestinians or for any other Arabs, but were acting in Egyptian interests, and did so by their own choice. If that is true, they choose to stop doing so now.

IN SEEKING peace, Sadat counted very heavily on the United States. From time to time he has remarked that the United States holds 99 per cent of the cards. At the time of the Israeli election in May 1977, when Begin and a rather hawkish coalition took power in Israel, Sadat was asked whether he did not think that this would change matters for the worse. His comment was that it did not greatly matter who won the elections in Israel since it was the United States that would make the ultimate decision.

From the moment when American governments sought to play a peacemaking role in the Middle Eastern conflict, it was clear that there were three possible ways in which this might be done. The first was to pressure the Arab governments to accept a pro-Israel solution; the second to pressure the Israelis to accept a pro-Arab solution; the third to devise or join with others in devising some suitable compromise and work for its acceptance by both sides.

The first of these three—to pressure the Arabs to accept a pro-Israel solution—has, so far as I am aware, never been considered. The second, to pressure Israel to accept a pro-Arab solution, has been widely discussed, both negatively and positively,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and seems to have been the expectation not only of President Sadat but also of King Khalid of Saudi Arabia and other moderate—meaning pro-Western —Arab governments.

Such an expectation was not entirely unreasonable in itself. It had been encouraged by some American and European voices, ranging from those at one end who wanted to "save Israel in spite of herself" by forcing the Israelis to make concessions to the Arabs, to those at the other end who quite frankly, in the name of commercial or national expediency (the two are often confused), advocated throwing Israel to the wolves after first carving it into convenient-sized morsels and providing the wolves with new dentures for easier mastication.

These hopes were encouraged, rather than diminished, by the Likud victory in the Israeli election in May 1977. It was widely assumed, and indeed stated at the time in some Egyptian and other circles, that, with the replacement of the comparatively benign Yitzhak Rabin or Shimon Peres by the ogreish Menachem Begin, a chasm would open, not only between Israel and American public opinion but even between Israel and the American Jews. This, it was thought, would make it possible to isolate Israel from its main source of support and thereby achieve a solution more favorable to Arab interests.

Given recent trends and pronouncements, this was not in itself an unreasonable expectation, and it seems to have been held by some Arab governments. But Sadat, more acute than other Arab leaders, realized that an imposed pro-Arab solution was not, at least at that juncture, possible. This became dramatically clear at the beginning of October when the governments of the Soviet Union and the United States issued a joint declaration which looked to some like a blueprint for such an imposed solution—and was followed almost immediately by the virtual abandonment of its main points by the United States government. The crisis revealed that support for Israel among the American people and political elite went far beyond the limits of the Jewish community and that the United States government either would not or, if it would, could not impose a solution of the kind that was anticipated, not even on the unpopular Begin.*

This left a third possibility, a negotiated compromise. Such, indeed, appears to be the policy of the United States government. President Carter early in his administration perceived and declared that a compromise must rest on two principles—Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories and Arab willingness to recognize Israel and enter into normal peaceful relations with it. The first of these two points has long been a commonplace in American pronouncements on the subject. The recognition of the second by President Carter was an important innovation and brought a peaceful solution perceptibly nearer. Not so long ago when Yitzhak Rabin, as Israel's Prime Minister, proposed normal relations as an objective, he was accused of trying to sabotage the peacemaking process by making unreasonable demands which the Arabs could not possibly accept. President Carter has not only accepted the need for normal relations, but has also recognized that the two principles, withdrawal and normalization, are inextricably linked.

There were, however, other aspects to Washington's mediation which seem to have been less helpful. One was the desire, which found expression in the October declaration, to involve the Russians in the process of negotiation and settlement. This seems to have caused some alarm to President Sadat. It was bad enough to have the Russians coming at him from Libya and Ethiopia. The joint declaration and the line of policy which it represented threatened him with the prospect of the Russians coming at him from Washington and Geneva too. This was not a pleasing prospect—and the more disturbing in that it disclosed on the part of those who had engineered it a somewhat disquieting lack of contact with political realities in the Middle East. Much the same may be said of Washington's earlier insistence on a pan-Arab approach to the negotiations. This meant achieving nothing, since it was only on nothing that all parties could agree. The involvement of the Arab extremists in the negotiations had already made things difficult, if not impossible. Bringing in the Russians finally and conclusively led the road to Geneva into a blind alley.

It was no doubt the perception of this brutal fact which sent Sadat on his epoch-making journey. He had banked very heavily on American ability to solve the problem, whether by imposing a pro-Arab solution on Israel or by leading both sides toward a negotiated compromise. When he saw that the first was politically impossible and that the second had reached a dead end, he decided to respond to the feelers which had meanwhile been put out by Begin. The process began with indirect exchanges in Bucharest, continued with secret preparatory talks between Dayan and a high Egyptian official, and became public with Sadat's dramatic offer to go to Jerusalem.

THE offer to visit the enemy capital was not in itself new. Golda Meir had made such offers on earlier occasions, as had other Israeli Prime Ministers. There were, however, two important new elements this time. One is that the offer came from the Arab and not the Israeli side; the other is that it was accepted.

President Sadat's journey was a courageous,

* The failure of the pro-Israel forces this past May to prevent the sale of planes to Saudi Arabia may give rise to the belief that this is no longer true. Such a belief, and the resulting expectations, could effectively block the way to an agreed settlement.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

imaginative, and also an astute political act, and its results are already impressive. That it was possible at all is due in no small measure to the preparatory work of the previous and present U.S. administrations. Curiously enough, the immediate American reaction to the Sadat proposal was somewhat negative, rather suggestive of a frustrated matchmaker whose prospective clients start dating. Some of the objections which were raised at the time seem a bit strange. One was that Sadat's action might block the road to Geneva, the implication being that Geneva was so important an objective in itself that even peace must not be allowed to interfere with it.

Another objection was that Sadat's action would disrupt Arab unity. A more practical formulation of this objection was that it was the unity not of the Arabs as a whole but of the moderate pro-Western Arab states that was at issue. If these were fragmented, it was argued, and Egypt were isolated, nothing could be done and a dangerous situation would arise. But to speak of isolating Egypt within the Arab world, still more within the pro-Western Arab bloc, is reminiscent of the famous headline which once appeared in the *Times* of London in the 19th century: "Fog in Channel, Continent Isolated." Egypt has approximately one-third of the population and two-thirds of the skills of the Arab world. From Morocco to the Gulf, Egyptian teachers, specialists, and technicians of every kind render indispensable services. Egypt is the core and reservoir of the Arab world, and to speak of Egyptian isolation within it is an absurdity.

The parameters of unity and disunity among the Arab states are a complex and difficult problem, but it is and has for long been clear that there can be no progress toward peace on the basis of a united Arab front, even if such could ever be constituted. Since the days when the British Mandatory government first brought the Arab states into the affairs of the Palestine Mandate at the St. James's Palace Conferences, inter-Arab agreement has only been possible on maximum demands. The only moves toward peace during the last thirty years have been on the basis of separate agreements, and each time it was the Egyptians who set the pattern. Egypt decided, others followed. This was true of the Rhodes Armistice Agreements of 1949 and of the disengagement agreements of 1974. It could still be true again.

Eventually, the United States government seems to have overcome its alarm at the possible threats to Arab unity or to Soviet collaboration offered by the Egyptian peace policy; it has given Sadat its full support, thereby enabling him to proceed within a wider context and, incidentally, making it more difficult for him to proceed—should he wish it—alone.

Some of Sadat's Arab critics, unwilling to come out openly against the quest for peace as such, concentrated their criticism on his dramatic gesture in going to Jerusalem and talking to the Knesset. If, they argued, he had reached a point where he felt it necessary to talk to the Israeli Prime Minister face to face, he could have done so quietly and on neutral ground. Why, they asked, did he offer the Israelis this dramatic public gesture, which must obviously have cost him a great deal within the Arab constituency?

We can only speculate as to the reasons for Sadat's action. The most probable is his realization that only by something public and dramatic could he hope to overcome the deep Israeli distrust of him and of his regime. As he himself remarked with some truth, it was the removal of the psychological barrier that was the most urgent need. Sadat was no doubt right in assuming that only in this way could he hope to allay thirty years of mistrust and hostility.*

THE reaction of the Arab states varied considerably. Some came out in immediate support; among them was the Sudan, a country of particular importance to Egypt. Others, predictably, denounced the initiative; these included South Yemen, Iraq, Libya, and Algeria, all at a safe distance from the battlefields. Syria adopted a somewhat ambiguous stance, opposing the Sadat policy but not entirely rallying to the rejectionist bloc. Clearly, the Syrians dislike Sadat's approach but realize that they will have to follow his example if he succeeds. The PLO, after some initial hesitation, eventually obeyed its own inner logic and came out strongly against the initiative. The Jordanians, whose role is of crucial importance and may well determine the success or failure of the enterprise, have remained cautious. King Hussein has not opposed the initiative, but he is unlikely to join the negotiations until there is some stronger assurance that they will succeed and some clearer indication of his own part in them.

Particularly interesting is the reaction of the Saudis, who publicly have been neither for nor against the initiative and privately have been quoted as both opposing and supporting it. The Saudis were undoubtedly angry at not having been consulted by Sadat before he made his journey to Jerusalem. As one of them remarked, "It is usual to consult your banker before starting on a new enterprise." Sadat, however, was probably right in not consulting them. If he was determined to go on his journey, there was indeed no other

* There are specific as well as general reasons for this mistrust, deriving from Sadat's collaboration with Nazi Germany and, more recently, from the "strategic deception" of October 1973 (described by both Mohamed Hassanein Heikal in *The Road to Ramadan* and Sadat in his autobiography, *In Search of Identity*), in which words of peace were used to achieve surprise in war.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

way. To consult the Saudis in advance would in effect have meant asking their permission—and they would almost certainly have refused it. To act without consulting them was no doubt an offense in their eyes, but it was a much smaller offense than it would have been to consult them, receive a negative answer, and then proceed all the same.

There may perhaps be another reason for Saudi pique. In recent years Egypt has, intentionally or otherwise, withdrawn from the role of Arab leadership exercised by the late President Nasser. This left a vacancy for which there were several candidates but which no Arab state was strong enough to fill. The Saudis, thanks to their great wealth, their comparatively peaceful home front, their financial leverage with the Fatah, and their excellent relations with Washington, had gradually been assuming a role of Arab leadership and had in many respects been accepted, particularly in the West, as the spokesmen of the Arab world. Paradoxically, Sadat's very rejection of a pan-Arab approach amounted to a reassertion of Egyptian initiative and, therefore, primacy in the Arab world. The Saudis were understandably irritated and their subsequent policies toward Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinians may perhaps be better understood in this light.

In spite of all these considerations, the Saudis have at least supported Sadat's policy to the extent of not publicly opposing it. One reason, no doubt, is that they cannot risk the overthrow of Sadat's regime and the possible emergence of a radical regime in his place. One Qaddafi is bad enough. A second Qaddafi in the Nile Valley would represent a mortal threat to the Saudi regime. Similar considerations may explain a certain lack of enthusiasm in Egypt as well as in several other Arab countries for the creation of a Palestinian state on the West Bank.

SADAT went to Jerusalem and back, and after the speeches and the crowds and the euphoria came a series of disappointments—to both sides. Many Egyptians seem to have genuinely expected that once they had made the gesture of recognizing Israel—not merely recognizing but even welcoming Israel to the Middle East, to quote Sadat's speech to the Knesset—the rest would be comparatively easy and a peace settlement could follow rapidly and without complications. Looking back now, such an expectation may seem naive and simplistic, but is quite excusable. The Israelis, their spokesmen, and their friends have after all been insisting for the last thirty years that the root of the problem is not territory but the total Arab refusal to recognize and accept Israel or even talk to Israelis. It was therefore not unreasonable for Sadat to feel that once he was willing to change this, to recognize and accept Israel, to enter into a dialogue, even to go to Jerusalem and address the Israeli parliament, all the rest should be simple.

It may even be that this hypothesis is a true one; unfortunately, it has not yet been tested. All that Sadat could offer the Israelis was the recognition and acceptance of Egypt, and although, in the long run, these will probably prove decisive, in the short run they are not sufficient. There are still other Arab states and organizations which remain wedded to the earlier view that Israel's very existence is an offense and that only its excision can bring peace to the Middle East.

The Egyptians were also very disappointed by Israeli actions on Sinai settlements which were established and then extended on Egyptian territory for no reason that made sense to them. This, moreover, was done in a public and provocative way *just at the moment when delicate negotiations* were in progress. The televised bulldozers at Yamit and the hourly announcements of new settlements from the Israeli radio came as a deep shock to the Egyptians. The explanations which were forthcoming, based, in the main, on Israeli domestic politics, convinced few and satisfied none. It would be a bitter irony if the Egyptians, trying to contract out of the conflict through their rejection of Arab nationalism, were to be swept back in again on a wave of outraged Egyptian patriotism. Sinai, after all, is not an Arab question; it is an Egyptian question.

The Israelis, too, had their disappointments. When Sadat arrived in Israel he was given a quite extraordinarily emotional and enthusiastic welcome, with thousands of Israelis waving Egyptian flags, most of them homemade since Egyptian flags are not readily available in Israel; he was greeted by a full turnout of the government, opposition, and other notables, and escorted all the way from Ben-Gurion Airport to Jerusalem. When, by contrast, Begin and his staff went to Ismailia, they were driven through bare and empty streets with no flags but only the signs still standing, which acclaimed Sadat as the conqueror of the Canal and the victor of Suez.

The reasons for this disparity are not difficult to find. The situation is very different in the two countries, and the two have different problems with which to contend. Nevertheless, the contrast between the two receptions as shown on television had a somewhat dampening effect. This was, however, in part alleviated by the heartwarming stories which Israelis read in their newspapers of the welcome accorded to Israeli journalists and delegates in Egypt. It was noted that an enthusiastic welcome came spontaneously from the people, while only the official welcome was cautious and restrained. Still, the explanation which was given—security—was not entirely convincing. There are, after all, more Palestinians in Jerusalem than in Ismailia. Probably the real reason for the difference is that the Egyptians still have to worry about the effects of their actions on the Arabs. However

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

much they may wish to abandon pan-Arabism as a foreign policy, they nevertheless retain important links, financial and other, with the countries of the Arab world.

A SECOND Israeli disappointment was in the treatment of the peace initiative by the media in the two countries. The Israeli press is not controlled and is, one might add, uncontrollable. Nevertheless, there was not a single line in any Israeli newspaper that was lacking in respect or courtesy to the President of Egypt or to the Egyptian nation. The Egyptian press is no longer censored as it was in Nasser's day, but is still open to official guidance.* Yet, two days after the Ismailia conference, when negotiations were still proceeding, some Egyptian newspapers began to publish articles, scurrilous in content and violent in language, attacking not only the Israelis and Zionism, which might have been accepted philosophically, but even the Jewish people and the Jewish religion from now right back into antiquity. (One such article presented the biblical story of the Exodus as an Egyptian nationalist movement expelling Jewish plutocrats who, in accordance with the usual habits of the Tribe, had dominated and exploited the Egyptian economy.)

One of the most violent of these writers, Anis Mansur, is a leading Egyptian journalist who stands to Sadat in much the same relationship as Mohamed Hassanein Heikal did to Nasser. He is the editor of the weekly magazine *October*, which is Sadat's favorite platform, and the author of a daily column on the back page of *Al Ahram*, and is generally regarded as Sadat's personal spokesman. Anis Mansur is a prolific writer, and the Jews have long been one of his favorite subjects (others are ghosts and visitors from outer space). His main source of information on Jews appears to be the Nazi literature of the 1930's. Some of his articles employ such themes as the Jewish plot to rule the world, the use of Gentile children's blood for Jewish ritual ceremonies, and other familiar anti-Semitic libels. All this quite obviously touches a very sensitive nerve in Israel. When people in Israel asked which is the voice of Egypt, Sadat or Anis Mansur, there were some who gave the somewhat bleak answer that Anis Mansur is the voice of Sadat.

Sadat's visit did much to demolish the psychological barrier which had so long existed between Egyptians and Israelis. Writers of anti-Semitic articles in the press were doing much to raise it again. Some observers have indeed thought that the tone and content of Egyptian press attacks on Israel, Begin, Zionists, Jews, and Judaism were intelligible only on the assumption that they represented a deliberate attempt to sabotage the peace process. Though this would certainly not be the wish or intention of the majority of Egyptian media men, such an explanation is not in itself absurd. The forces opposed to the peace process dispose of immense financial resources and have acquired great skill in their deployment. More recently, the government of Egypt has shown some awareness of the damaging effect of this kind of scurrility and has taken some steps to restrain it. While a certain level of invective and abuse is common in Middle Eastern journalism and politics, Israelis, and indeed Jews in general, find it difficult to trust interlocutors who call their Prime Minister a Shylock and cite the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.

A third development which not only caused disappointment in Israel but had the rather more serious effect of hardening Begin's position was the line put out from Cairo and echoed elsewhere and summed up in the formula, "I gave him everything, he gave me nothing." Sadat obviously really sees the issue in these terms. Clearly he felt that by going to Jerusalem and giving Israel recognition and acceptance, something which no Arab ruler or politician had been willing even to consider, he had made a major concession for which he felt he had received nothing comparable in return.

The Israelis saw this precisely the other way 'round. What they saw Sadat as giving them was words—beautiful and wonderful words which they had been waiting for thirty years to hear, but still just words and, like other words, reversible. They were, furthermore, accompanied by other, less agreeable words, and followed by some very disagreeable ones.

Concerning the importance of Sadat's recognition of Israel, the view of the present Israeli government is somewhat different from that of its predecessors. Governments of the Labor Alignment had for long insisted very strongly on recognition as the major objective. Begin, publicly at least, plays down the significance of this recognition,

* Sadat's claim to have abolished censorship over the Egyptian press is genuine and not mere make-believe. Censorship was indeed abolished, but an Egyptian journalist explained to me how, in some ways, this worsened rather than improved the situation. In the days when censorship was still in force, journalists and editors combined to develop an arcane language of symbols and allusions which both they and their readers—though apparently not the censors—were able to understand and which made possible the serious discussion of basic issues, albeit in a concealed form. When censorship was abolished, the editors themselves, in effect, became the censors. They receive guidance and apply it with far more skill and intelligence than the censors were ever able to do. Without the editors' collaboration, the conduct of such debates is no longer possible. When the editor of the leftist weekly *al-Ahali* broke the rules of this new game, Sadat sought and obtained powers to deal with such dissidence. An example of self-censorship may be seen in the way in which news from Israel is handled in the Egyptian press. Often, important Israeli pronouncements are not cited textually but merely commented upon, with occasional direct quotations; these may be followed by rows of exclamation marks, to indicate to the reader which part of the printed text he is expected to disbelieve.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which he sees merely as a long overdue acceptance of the obvious. As Begin presents the situation, Sadat gave him only words, in return for which he was expected to capitulate to all of Sadat's demands.

IN FACT, both sides have made substantial concessions for which neither is willing to give the other credit. Sadat's position has been modified in two respects—first in regard to what he is demanding, second in regard to what he is offering in return. On the first of these the change has been more limited. When Sadat addressed the Knesset his demands were precisely the same as those which had been put forward by Egypt and other Arab states for some time past—Israeli withdrawal from *all* occupied territories acquired in 1967 and the recognition of the "legitimate rights of the Palestinians," a term at that time generally understood to mean the establishment of a Palestinian state ruled by the PLO. Both of these demands went beyond the declaration of principles embodied in Resolution 242, which speaks of withdrawal from territories, but not necessarily all of them, and makes no political reference to the Palestinians. On the question of total Israeli withdrawal, Sadat has made no compromise on the ultimate objective but has been willing to consider a staged withdrawal with various interim arrangements. On the second point, the change has been more substantial. Egypt has in effect withdrawn the recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestine people conceded at the 1974 Arab summit conference in Rabat, and has until recently appeared to have abandoned the idea of a separate Palestinian state. This would mean, in practice, the acceptance of a Jordanian solution.

Much more dramatic is the change in what Sadat is offering in return. He began by offering virtually nothing, then vague suggestions of possible better relations in an undefined future, then post-dated half-promises, and then, finally, the breakthrough to full recognition and real peace. This, too, goes beyond the terms of Resolution 242, and represents a major change of policy, a radical departure from the positions previously held by Egypt and still regarded as axiomatic in most of the Arab world. Within the context of Arab politics this is indeed a concession of major dimensions.

But if Arab concessions must be seen within the context of Arab politics, so must Israeli concessions be seen within the context of Israeli politics, and in this sense the Israelis conceded something very substantial indeed, namely the Sinai peninsula.* At the very first session of the meeting in Ismailia, if not earlier, Begin told Sadat that he recognized Sinai as Egyptian and made no territorial claims. In other words, Begin accepted the old international frontier.

From the Egyptians' point of view, this is no concession at all but merely giving them back what is their own. The Israelis, on the other hand, argue that after a war, changes in the frontier are the rule rather than the exception. They further argue that after a series of wars in which the issue was the survival of Israel and the military results were overwhelmingly in their favor, it would not be abnormal to have some strategic modification of the frontier. In fact, they asked for none. The Labor Alignment government had always insisted on retaining Sharm el-Sheikh at the southern tip of the Sinai peninsula. By renouncing all Israeli territorial claims on Egypt up to the previous international line, Begin incurred much criticism in his own camp, not only from the oppostion which, on this point, took a more hawkish position than the government, but also from members of his own party. Some of his critics argued that he should not have made such a concession at all but should have insisted on retaining sovereignty over strategic air and military bases as well as settlements. Others, perhaps more important, agreed that such a statement might have been made, but felt that it should have come at the end and not at the beginning of negotiations. It was shortly after this that an election was held within the Likud for a vacancy in the Cabinet. Begin's nominee was opposed by a more hawkish candidate who, thus, directly challenged Begin's authority in his own party and coalition. Begin's candidate won the election but by an alarmingly narrow margin.

It was in this atmosphere that the two major problems—the settlements in Sinai and the declaration of principles regarding the Palestinians—came up for discussion. The question of the settlements was precipitated by Begin's renunciation of Sinai and had the most unfortunate repercussions in Egypt. Just as the anti-Semitic language used in Egyptian newspapers touched a sensitive nerve in

* Begin's only immediate concession, made in his speech to the Knesset in reply to Sadat, may seem a trifling one—the offer to admit holders of Egyptian passports wishing to visit Israel. Such permission is unusual between states at war, though not, in fact, for the Israelis, who have long permitted the movement of persons, goods, and publications between the Arab world and Israel via the bridges over the Jordan and the occupied West Bank. It might, however, have made more of an impression than it did on the Arabs who after 1948 refused visas not only to Israeli Jews but even to non-Jewish Israelis and non Israeli Jews. Many Arab states still ask about religion in their visa application forms, and obstruct or refuse those applicants who declare their religion as Jewish and are without special sponsorship. Before the occupation by the Israelis of East Jerusalem in 1967, not only were Jews barred from the Old City, but Israeli Muslims, too, were unable to visit their holy places there and even Israeli Christians could do so only once a year, on Christmas day, and under very strict regulations. Until now, Israeli Muslims are not permitted by the Saudis to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. For Muslims this is a serious matter, since their pilgrimage to the holy places in Arabia, unlike the Jewish or Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem, is not optional but compulsory; it is one of the five basic duties of the faith, and failure to perform it is a sin.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Israel, so the suggestion of a foreign presence, particularly a foreign military presence, touched a sensitive nerve in Egypt.

It was not, however, on the Sinai question but on the Palestine question that the negotiations broke down. Of the two committees esablished in Ismailia, the military committee was concerned with most bilateral issues between Egypt and Israel. It seemed to be functioning fairly well and was working out a compromise agreement for a staged Israeli withdrawal from Sinai. The political committee, meeting in Jerusalem, was primarily concerned with the declaration of principles on the Palestinian question. Sadat's decision to withdraw the Egyptian delegation in January broke the momentum of negotiation. Despite attempts from various quarters, the process has not been effectively resumed.

The circumstances of the Egyptian withdrawal remain somewhat mysterious. The meeting was not broken off because the work of the committee had reached a deadlock. Negotiations were difficult but were continuing, and some of the participants on both sides had expressed cautious optimism. Various explanations have been offered as to Sadat's reasons for recalling his delegation. One is that he was offended by Begin's strong words at a dinner of welcome for the Egyptian delegation. Another is that he was outraged by Israeli policy on the settlements which he saw as an indication that Israel prized territory above peace. A third theory is that this was a gesture toward the Arabs, and more particularly the Saudis, to whom he has to demonstrate from time to time that the peace process is neither simple nor easy.

Since then, contacts have continued in a desultory way. A small Israeli liaison mission remains in Cairo and from time to time there are direct contacts between Israeli and Egyptian personalities. An American attempt at shuttle diplomacy between the two produced no substantial results but at least helped to keep the process alive. Even now, despite the lack of progress, neither side is willing to declare that the initiative has failed. Indeed, in the domestic crisis in Egypt in May of this year it is noteworthy that the question of the peace initiative and relations with Israel did not figure either in the attacks on Sadat from opposition groups or in his referendum of the Egyptian people.

With Sadat's acceptance of the principles of recognition and normalization, and Begin's recognition of Egyptian sovereignty over Sinai, two of the main obstacles to peace have been removed. Two more remain: the question of the Israeli settlements and bases on the Egyptian side of the old international frontier, and the question of the Palestinians.

The first of these, though undoubtedly difficult, is manageable. Being concerned with places and lines, it is the kind of problem that can be formulated and discussed between governments. Furthermore, it is of a purely bilateral nature, concerning only Egypt and Israel. Once a modicum of mutual trust and good will is established, some reasonable solution of this problem will undoubtedly be devised.

The other problem, that of the Palestinians, is far more difficult. On this Sadat has made certain changes in his previous position, notably in his acceptance of a link with Jordan as the most desirable solution. Sadat has also made it clear that he does not feel himself to be empowered to negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians but must leave that to others. Instead, he would be content with a declaration of principles safeguarding the interests of the Palestinians and, thereby, also the honor of Egypt.* Some Egyptians, including leading intellectuals, have indeed gone further and have argued in the press that Egypt should no longer sacrifice its interests for such ungrateful allies and should not delay the recovery of its own territory for the sake of others. This, however, is not Egyptian government policy. Sadat's position remains that the Israelis must bind themselves in advance to withdrawal from all occupied territory in favor of an Arab, possibly Jordanian, authority. Even here, some compromise regarding the stages and extent of Israeli withdrawal might be devised, but obviously no real progress will be possible without Israeli agreement to the principle of withdrawal, which is still unclear; Egyptian consent to some territorial modification, which is still uncertain; and Jordanian participation, which is as yet not forthcoming.

There was a moment when the peace initiative might have brought immediate results. For a variety of reasons, some on the one side, some on the other, this did not happen. The process of peacemaking has not ceased, but it is making no visible progress. Sadat's recent moves to strengthen his position in Egypt may be motivated by domestic considerations; they may also be preparatory to a major policy change—either to end the peace initiative, or to make a separate peace. His measures seem excessive for the present level of dissidence, but might be needed to deal with the reaction to either of these two courses. His choice between the two will be determined very largely by Israeli responses and by Saudi constraints. In the meantime, Sadat has clarified his own position and imposed a searching test on others—on the will to peace of the Israelis, the ultimate intentions of

* The problem of the declaration of principles illustrates one of the many contrasts in this wholly asymmetrical dispute. For most of the members of the UN, declarations of principles have a life and significance of their own, not necessarily related to what is actually done. Israel belongs to the small minority of states which regard themselves as bound by declarations which they make. Even if an Israeli government were disposed to disregard such declarations, it would be held to them not only by its enemies but also, and perhaps more especially, by its friends.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the PLO and their backers, the vaunted moderation of the Saudis, the wisdom and good will of the superpowers, the political courage and honesty of all the parties to both conflict and negotiation.

THE need for peace remains on both sides, Egypt and Israel. The factors which impelled Sadat to embark on his journey and the peoples of both Israel and Egypt to respond so warmly are still there and still effective. It would be utopian to expect that the antagonism, the hostility, the conflicts of thirty years could be swept aside within a matter of a few weeks or even a few months.

Nor are these the only difficulties. Quite apart from the problems at issue, there are also powerful interests opposed to peace and willing to make every effort to prevent it. These will not be easily overcome, and it may be that the peace initiative will fail and come to an end. In the short run, the failure of the initiative would leave things worse than before, but even so, much will have been achieved that is irreversible. No one can ever say that any Arab leader who tries to make peace with Israel will be denounced and destroyed by his own people. The Egyptian people have shown that for them at least this is not true. After thirty years of silence, a dialogue has begun; after thirty years of isolation, the antagonists have seen each other in human terms instead of as devils incarnate. Israelis have met Egyptians and got to know them and learned that they can talk to them; Egyptians have learned the same thing about Israelis. This process of mutual discovery may well continue, perhaps with setbacks, perhaps for a shorter, perhaps for a longer, period, until sooner or later some form of understanding is achieved between Israel and Egypt. And if and when that is accomplished, others will surely follow.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Is Peace Still Possible in the Middle East?

A Skeptical View

Steven J. Rosen

IT is becoming increasingly difficult to envision a near-term breakthrough in the current round of Middle East negotiations. Between Egypt's position that Israel must relinquish "every square inch, including Arab Jerusalem," plus the stipulation of self-determination for the Palestinian Arabs, and Israel's requirement of secure borders, plus the insistence of the governing Likud coalition on extensive historical rights in Judea and Samaria, the conditions for a compromise agreement do not seem to exist at the present time.

Yet there is a pervasive feeling among some observers in the United States that the remaining problems can be resolved, and that either a comprehensive settlement or at least a separate peace between Egypt and Israel can be achieved. Those who believe a comprehensive settlement is within sight base their hopes on a chain of developments regarding new policies that will or could be adopted by each of the states of the region. Menachem Begin is expected to retreat from his commitment to reconstituting the Land of Israel from the Mediterranean to the Jordan, and to agree to compromise lines putting some historic lands outside the modern Jewish state. Sadat is expected to accept, and sell to his Arab partners, compromise boundaries in the West Bank and the Golan, and to make a separate peace in the Sinai. Jordan must agree to resume responsibility for the Palestinians of the West Bank, accept Israeli military control of the Jordan Valley and the foothills of Judea and Samaria, resign itself to permanent demilitarization of the areas surrendered by Israel, and give extraterritorial status to the Jewish settlements in those areas. Syria must accept Israeli annexation of major areas of the Golan Heights, or at least agree to complex alternative security arrangements demilitarizing not just the Heights themselves, but also a large part of the Bashan plateau area leading back to Damascus. A new, non-PLO, moderate leadership must emerge among the Palestinian Arabs of Gaza and the West Bank, and then agree to conditional autonomy within a truncated "Palestinian Bantustan" federated with the Bedouin kingdom of Jordan but under the de facto military control of Israel. The United States must agree to a military guarantee for Israel, and Israel must accept such a guarantee as compensation for the weakening of its own defense capabilities.

Overall, what is offered by those who foresee an immediate comprehensive settlement is not so much a projection of developments with a reasonable prospect of fulfillment in the near term as an exercise that borders on wishful thinking. Each of the elements in the analysis assumes a millennial transformation in the presently known position of one of the key actors. The probability that *all* will be realized in the near future strains credulity. Yet, if only one or two of the optimistic assumptions are denied, a near-term settlement is precluded.

There is a curious enthnocentrism behind this school's image of the future. Some American observers who are keenly aware of the limitations on the freedom of action of their own country, and who are sensitive to the difficulties of even the most marginal changes in the foreign policies of the United States and Europe, seem to throw all caution to the wind when they turn to a "peripheral" region like the Middle East. When, as in Sadat's unexpected journey to Jerusalem, extraordinary events do occur, these are seen not as rare departures from known and relatively stable patterns, but as proof that nothing is impossible.

A SECOND school offers a more qualified and purportedly more realistic assessment of the opportunities created by the Sadat initiative. Its adherents admit that the conditions for a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israel conflict do not exist at the present time, particularly with regard to the Palestinian problem and the

STEVEN J. ROSEN is a Senior Research Fellow at the Australian National University and is presently at Brandeis. His article, "Arms and the Saudi Connection" (written with Haim Shaked), appeared in last month's issue.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

final disposition of the West Bank, but they believe that the logic of the new situation created by Sadat's visit to Jerusalem has opened the possibility of a more limited but still enormously significant achievement, namely, a separate peace between Egypt and Israel. This would take out of the confrontation the largest Arab state; reduce the probability of a future reorientation of Cairo back to the Soviet Union; anchor one end of the Arab tightrope firmly in the West; and create new incentives for the other elements of the Arab coalition to accommodate themselves to a realistic and pragmatic future settlement on the other fronts.

What makes proponents of this line believe that a separate peace between Egypt and Israel is possible? Two principles seem to be at the root of the argument: (1) the unique geographic character of the Sinai, which is more conducive to a settlement than the geography and demography of the other fronts; and (2) the objective interests of Israel and Egypt, which can be reconciled more easily than the conflicts between Israel and the other parties (provided, of course, that the Sinai issue can be disengaged from those of the other fronts).

Postulated this way, the argument has considerable merit, although it is not without difficulties of its own. Israelis do not fully accept that Sinai is an integral, historic part of Egypt, and they point out that Egypt came into possession of the peninsula as recently as 1906, in an agreement between British imperial interests in Egypt and the Ottoman rulers of Palestine. This was itself more a consequence of British defense requirements for the Suez Canal and of Ottoman weakness than of any intrinsic Egyptian claims to the peninsula. Moreover, the archeological traces are equivocal on the issue of whether Sinai historically was part of the land ruled as Palestine or of Egypt: the traces of Nilotic or Egyptian civilization predominate in the west, those of Palestinian civilizations in the east. Nonetheless, Israelis acknowledge that Egypt's symbolic attachment to Sinai today is greater than Israel's, effectively conceding to Egypt a superior historic claim, and even the Begin government evaluates the Sinai issue on security-oriented rather than historic criteria. This means that if the peninsula could be restored to Egyptian sovereignty within an arrangement that kept the risk to Israel at a tolerable level, there would be no insurmountable problem on the Israeli side.

The security problems themselves are relatively uncomplicated here, as the Sinai peninsula is almost uniquely suited to serve as a buffer between two former adversaries. The vast and nearly unpopulated desert puts 120 miles of empty space between the developed areas of Israel and Egypt's fertile Nile delta and populous Canal cities to the southwest. From a military point of view, east-west movement is limited to a few main axes in central Sinai, as the southern triangle of the peninsula below the line from Suez to Eilat is blocked by a highly elevated granite massif, and the northern zone along the Mediterranean coast is characterized by deep and undulating sand dunes that impede the movement of mass formations of armored vehicles and their supply trains.

The few central axes of military movement are crossed by as many as five defensive lines providing some natural fortification or terrain advantages to resist attacking forces: (1) the Suez Canal; (2) the western spine of hills including the Gidi and Mitla passes; (3) Gebel Ma'ara and Gebel Ya'alaq; (4) Gebel Libne and Gebel Halal; and (5) the El-Arish/Abu Aweigila/Quseima triangle. In effect, these positions unfold as successive fallback lines of defense in either direction, providing safeguards in the event that either side at some future date undertakes to violate an alternative security arrangement established by treaty. Such an arrangement would include a large demilitarized zone in the central part of Sinai; arms-limitation agreements to control force levels in other areas; special provisions to insure that the Straits of Tiran at the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba/Eilat would not be subject to blockade; and other technical provisions. While there are a few unresolved questions regarding Sinai, it appears that terms acceptable to both Egypt and Israel could be worked out if this were the only issue between the two states. In particular, Israel would have to surrender Yamit and the highly publicized settlements in the so-called Rafiah salient, but it is clear from private discussions with Israeli military and political officials that there is considerable sentiment in favor of yielding on these points if they were to become the only obstacles to a separate peace that would end the conflict with the largest Arab state.

It seems true, then, that if the outstanding issues were only the bilateral problems between Israel and Egypt, the physical requirements of peace could be satisfied. The two states have already resolved the most difficult elements of a Sinai compromise. Begin has reversed his longstanding position that Israel must remain in control of the peninsula, and Sadat has conceded the issue of full normalization following a settlement. On both sides, there have been substantial and painful concessions, and it would be unfair not to acknowledge the statesmanship that is evident on this issue.

WHAT, then, is holding up a bilateral settlement? To answer this, it is necessary to go beyond the technical, objective prerequisites of a separate peace and ask whether it is the will of the parties. The most obvious and apparent difficulty is President Sadat's official position, which he has asserted from the outset of the peace initiative and reaffirmed at every opportunity since, that his aim is a comprehensive settlement of the conflict in all its elements, and not a separate peace between Egypt and Israel. In con-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

crete terms, this means a full Israeli withdrawal to the pre-1967 lines and self-determination for the Palestinian Arabs on the West Bank and in Gaza. On the question of territorial compromise, Sadat was completely explicit when he spoke before the Knesset:

> Our land does not yield itself to bargaining, it is not even open to argument. To us, the nation's soil is equal to the holy valley where God Almighty spoke to Moses. . . . We cannot accept any attempt to take away one inch of it, nor can we accept the principle of debating or bargaining over it. . . . And we insist on realizing full withdrawal, including Arab Jerusalem.

Behind this position is a perception that the armistice lines of 1949, which were not regarded by Arab leaders as having permanent legal status or political legitimacy until recently, have somehow over time come to be the "natural" lines of division delineating "Israel proper," while the acquisitions of June 1967 are "territories annexed by force" and "Arab lands usurped by Israel."

Of course, from the Israeli point of view, this is a very considerable improvement compared to Nasser, who considered "Israel's very existence an act of aggression," and to the more strident elements of the Arab camp, who regard not just the 1967 territories but also the lines of 1949 as reflecting nothing more than conquests by Jewish armies. Yet though President Sadat's position represents the dovish end of the Arab spectrum, the great majority of Israelis find it an unacceptable basis for a comprehensive settlement. According to available electoral and poll data, 60 to 75 per cent of Israelis would be prepared to make extensive concessions in Judea and Samaria, in spite of the eloquent defense of Israel's claims to these areas put forth by their Prime Minister, but no more than 5 to 10 per cent would agree to withdraw from certain key positions in Golan and the Jordan Valley which are considered indispensable to Israeli defense; and there is almost no one willing to give up Jerusalem.

THE advocates of a separate peace are aware that the linkage of Sinai to the other fronts would make it impossible to resolve the easiest issue until the most difficult ones can be settled. But they reconcile the dilemma by rejecting a "face-value" interpretation of Sadat's position, in place of which they offer a reconstruction of the private intentions he must have had in mind when he undertook his peace initiative. As Robert W. Tucker sees it:

> If Sadat did not go to Jerusalem with the intention of making a separate peace in all but name, then his action appears foolhardy. He could scarcely have believed that in isolation from his Arab partners, and against the bitter opposition of some, he could obtain for them what they stood virtually no chance of obtaining while preserving at least the semblance of unity.*

Sadat's insistence on the principle of a comprehensive settlement and his rejection of a separate peace are therefore dismissed as tactical gambits to conceal the reverse motives. It follows that, if Israel had agreed to a nebulous statement on withdrawal from the other fronts, along the lines of Resolution 242 and open to various interpretations, and had accepted a vague and equally flexible formulation of the idea of Palestinian self-determination, a de facto separate peace could have been achieved without materially affecting the future bargaining latitude of any of the parties with regard to the other fronts.

There is a curious convergence here between the views of Western advocates of a separate settlement between Egypt and Israel who applauded the Sadat initiative, and Arab voices in the "steadfastness" front who have declared their opposition to the Sadat initiative in the most forceful terms. Both schools reject the prima facie meaning of Sadat's words and see behind them hidden motives, hopeful to the first school, sinister to the second. The two schools also agree that Israel has missed an opportunity in not recognizing Sadat's hidden meaning and exploiting it to take Egypt out of the confrontation. The two schools disagree, however, on the American role; the Arabs of the "steadfastness" front believe that the United States was privy to the real intention of Sadat's actions from a very early point, while the Western advocates of a separate peace believe that Washington still has not had the vision or courage to recognize and seize this opportunity. But even here there is a core of similarity: both assess the Carter administration with a goodly share of the blame.

But the burden of proof of this reconstruction of Sadat's hidden motives is on the authors of it, as is proper when a perfectly sensible statement of his motives has been given by the speaker himself. A considerable body of evidence is available regarding Egyptian intentions, and most of it *supports* the "face-value" interpretation of Sadat's motives. The evolution of the Egyptian consensus over the last five years is manifest in official pronouncements, press commentaries, and private discussions with Western visitors, and while it is still possible for an Egyptian leader to implement this consensus in surprising ways (as in October 1973 and November 1977), it seems unlikely that a wholesale departure from established principles on the scale of a separate peace would not be reflected somewhere in observable behavior.

Indeed, these sources suggest an explanation of Sadat's actions that is consistent with his own. From the Egyptian and Arab point of view, the decision to accept permanently a Jewish state in the middle of the Arab world, and to relocate the Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and Gaza

* "The Middle East: For a Separate Peace," COMMENTARY, March 1978.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rather than in their original homes in what is now "Israel proper," represents an extraordinary concession and compromise on their part. What is being asked of Israel, namely, to return to the very lines within which it lived happily until 1967, seems to Egyptians relatively minor by comparison. Israeli counterclaims in Judea and Samaria, based on events that preceded the birth of Muhammad, simply have no relevance today and are seen as expressions of jingoist ideology and imperial rationalization. Israeli arguments based on security requirements are taken more seriously, but on these the Egyptian understanding differs fundamentally from that of Israel. For example, as anyone knows who has discussed the issue with Egyptian officials, soldiers, or scholars, even the most candid and forthcoming individuals refuse to be drawn into a discussion of the problem of secure borders. Egyptians genuinely believe, and they think Israelis already know or ought to learn, that there is no security in topographical obstacles, strategic depth, and defense barriers, but only in acceptance by one's neighbors. They also believe that the wind of history is behind the Arab sail, that the Arabs are bound to improve their relative military position over time, and that there is no security for Israel behind a permanent wall of military preparation. If the Arabs make peace with Israel, secure borders will not be necessary. If they do not make peace, secure borders will not be sufficient.

Therefore, the Israeli definition of security, which begins with maintaining a balance of power, is considered to be based on a false premise. Sophisticated Egyptians understand the Israeli obsession with military defense, given the unhappy history of the Jews in Europe and also (it is sometimes admitted) the fact that the Arabs would in the past have destroyed Israel if they had had the means. But now, they say, Israel has the opportunity for real peace—not merely victorious wars spaced by periods of deterrence, but real acceptance. American visitors and other friends of Israel are repeatedly told—and the message is given special force by the obvious sincerity and conviction of these Egyptians—that if Israel fails to grasp the opportunity now before it, it will miss the chance for real peace.

YET the Egyptians have observed, during the several years that they have tried to communicate this message, that the sincerity of their change of heart has not been understood by Israel. Therefore, they have taken their strategy to a new stage. The first stage had been frankly military in orientation, and had sought to defeat the Israeli armies in the field to bring about a change through coercion or by making the costs of war unacceptably high. This failing, a second stage was begun, with two elements. One was to improve the relationship with Washington, so that the United States would put pressure on Israel to make concessions it might otherwise reject. The other was to try to communicate with Israel through various third parties, in order to bring about a change in Israel's perception of the Arab threat. This approach, and the military option, have not been abandoned, but for some time there has been a growing acceptance of the idea that more direct communication is necessary if there is to be any hope of altering Israeli attitudes.

The opening of the third stage seems to be based on a recognition that what the Egyptians call "Israel's complex of fear and insecurity" is a problem not just for Israel but also for the Arabs in the search for peace in the Middle East. Indirect negotiations will not suffice: the Arabs must deal face to face with the Jewish state and try to influence the perceptions of its officials and citizens as to what their vital national interests are. This is probably what Sadat means when he says that at least 70 per cent of the problem today is psychological.

The dramatic decision of President Sadat to go directly to Jerusalem and stand in the Knesset must be understood primarily in this light, as an attempt to get the Israelis to rethink their own fundamental assumptions about security. If all he had in mind was Sinai, and if he was in fact prepared to make a separate peace, such an extraordinary measure would not have been necessary. It was exactly because he meant what he said, and believed that the Israelis, once they could judge for themselves the depth of his sincerity, might experience a change in their hearts regarding their own security requirements, that he was prepared to accept the risks of such an enterprise. To this end, the opposition of his colleagues, while obviously posing a considerable threat within the inter-Arab context, was actually an asset in dealing with Israel. Once the Israelis *saw* his willingness to speak the unspeakable, despite the hail of criticism brought down upon him, they would give added weight to his words. And beyond this, his willingness to go to Jerusalem, which of course is not regarded by the Arabs as the capital of Israel, to visit Yad Vashem, accepting the relevance of the Holocaust to the problem of the Middle East, to say openly that once we did not accept you but now we do—all of these were clear signals that he intended to sweep past secondary obstacles, to address the issues in terms that the Israelis would understand, to touch the Israelis where they live. None of this was essential if the only problem was Sinai.

Sadat has answered his Arab critics that if all he wanted was Sinai he could have had an agreement by now, and he has devoted the greater part of his effort with the Israelis to the profound problem of the Palestinians and the other fronts. American advocates of a separate peace do not seem to take seriously that it is the *Arab* Republic of Egypt, the *Arab* Socialist Union, and the *Arab* cause that form the frame of reference within which Sadat

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

operates. It is true that within every Arab state there are specifically national identities, not to mention subnational, Islamic, Third World, and other loyalties, but where is the evidence that Egypt is prepared fundamentally to separate itself from the Arab world?

Those who have emphasized the value to Egypt of a separate peace have been careful to sum up the economic and political gains of such a development, but they have not counted as carefully the economic and political costs. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and other Gulf oil states today underwrite virtually the entire capital budget of the Egyptian armed forces, not to mention a considerable portion of Sadat's economic-development program. These subsidies, said to be in excess of $2 billion per year, are extended not primarily out of a special concern for Egyptian needs as such, but on the recognition that wealthy "outer-ring" Arab states have a responsibility to offset some of the burden carried by the states on the front lines. If Egypt unilaterally removed itself from the coalition against Israel, it is entirely probable that the aid would be substantially reduced or withdrawn. Nor could American aid to Egypt, which already exceeds $1 billion per year, be increased to compensate such a loss on an ongoing basis. Similarly, the Arab Military Industries Organization facilities now under design and construction, which will be a major addition to Egypt's industrial capital, and indeed are the largest industrialization projects now contemplated, are financed by the oil states and might well be terminated as a consequence of a separate peace. Moreover, elements within the Egyptian armed forces and bureaucracy that would in any case oppose a break with the Arab front are much stronger now that they have as external allies the oil states as well as Syria, Iraq, and Libya. To point out that Sadat nonetheless managed to engineer his visit to Jerusalem without domestic upheaval is to ignore the considerable differences in scale between a separate peace and an independent tactical initiative undertaken within an agreed framework of basic assumptions.

II

IF NEITHER a comprehensive settlement nor a separate peace is immediately foreseeable, is it fair to ask what constructive measures *are* realistic? Behind such a question, there is often the unspoken belief that surely some solution must be available to achieve a decisive step for peace now. But it is at least a logical possibility that, in spite of the major step that was taken by President Sadat in November, no near-term complete or partial settlement can be achieved, and all we can hope for are additional steps to prepare the groundwork for a more distant breakthrough. The mood of "solutionism," which is now pervasive and which is reflected in both the proposals for a comprehensive settlement and those for a separate peace, may be premature. Even if we could invent a model agreement that in principle satisfied the essential needs of each of the parties, our construct might well call upon the various actors to accept terms which, however inevitable they may be in the longer perspective, would be unacceptable in the short term. A government may be constrained by domestic or international limitations on its freedom of action, or it may continue to believe, based on its reading of the trends in the balance of power, that it can get more than the share we have allotted it. Sadat's dramatic initiative has inspired visions of a new diplomacy for this troubled region, but it is probably the case that the long-term prospects for peace are more deeply affected by the endemic factors than by short-term factors under the control of individual leaders. The transition to peace may therefore span a decade rather than a few months. Among the fundamental changes that will be required are some basic assumptions on both sides.

On the Arab side, there will have to be a recognition that no Israeli government can or will agree to new arrangements under which Israel's security would depend primarily on the good will of the Arabs. It is no doubt the case that political recognition and true acceptance are the ultimate objectives of peace. But any Israeli government will have to negotiate on the assumption that the last line of Israeli withdrawal *could* be the starting point of the next Arab attack, should the Arab governments or their successors have another change of heart in the future and repudiate or violate the agreement. Western observers and the Arabs themselves may consider the resumption of a state of war unlikely after an agreement, but the future intentions of the Arabs cannot be known with certainty now even by the Arabs themselves. Therefore, it is an elementary requirement of any new arrangement that it provide for the reasonable worst case—i.e., that Israel be able to defend itself if the Arabs do in fact subsequently go to war.

This means in practice that the Israeli requirement for secure borders must be taken into account and that the Arab expectation of every last inch is unrealistic. While the peculiar geography of Sinai makes it possible to base an adequate Israeli defense behind the pre-1967 line, provided that the peninsula is demilitarized, the opportunities on the other fronts are less promising. The West Bank, Gaza, and Golan are directly contiguous to Israeli population centers, and in these areas the old lines are devoid of natural obstacles to the movement of regular military forces or guerrilla units. Three-quarters of the Jewish population of Israel, and half its industry, are concentrated in the narrow coastal strip, only 9 to 18 miles wide, from the former Jordanian armistice line to the Mediterranean sea. Modern artillery, like the Soviet M-54 field gun, which has a range in excess of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

17 miles, could reach any military installation, airfield, or factory in Israel's central zone from emplacements on the West Bank. Surface-to-air missiles such as the Soviet SA-2 or the U.S. Hawk would cover not only the air space over the West Bank itself but also that over most of Israel's first-line military airfields and the Ben-Gurion airport. Innumerable routes for guerrilla infiltration pass between the West Bank and the heavily populated areas of central Israel. The West Bank hills could provide ideal sanctuaries if they came under the control of a PLO government prepared to support a campaign of irregular warfare.

Nor would demilitarization be as simple to effect on this front. Unlike Sinai, the West Bank has an Arab population of 700,000, and there is a steady stream of commerce and communication between the local Arab population and the Arab countries to the east. Last year, 30,000 trucks crossed the Jordan bridges, carrying commercial goods to and from the Arab world. The West Bank would have its own airports and possibly also a seaport (at Gaza), and without meticulous inspection there would be opportunities to smuggle in significant quantities of modern arms, which concentrate accurate and effective firepower in smaller units. If a mechanism exists to prevent remilitarization without Israeli units in the Jordan Valley and other positions, it has not been identified convincingly in the available literature. Most advocates of demilitarization have merely assumed that the technical and political problems can be solved, without subjecting this assumption to any serious scrutiny, or they have reasoned from the "example" of Sinai. But Sinai is, in most respects, an exception rather than an example.

There are a very few Israeli military specialists, notably Matityahu Peled and Meir Pa'il, who demur from the consensus of the Israeli experts on the issue of secure borders, and their views have been given extensive and disproportionate publicity in the Arab world and the West. This has encouraged the illusion that what is in fact the preponderance of opinion in Israel on security questions, as reflected in the statements of senior military officers and ministers of defense, does not have to be taken seriously. There are, of course, also differences of opinion in the mainstream of Israeli thought on the requirements of security, but these take place within a narrower band. In the May 1977 elections, parties standing on a security platform similar to that of Pa'il and Peled got less than 2 per cent of the Jewish vote, though they had ample access to the media and put their case before the public fully and articulately. As the Arabs come to watch Israeli politics more closely, through elections, opinion polls, the media, and public statements, they will observe for themselves the real consensus within Israel and the limitations within which any Israeli government must operate. This will provide new opportunities to communicate with the Israelis, but it may also change the Arabs' perspective over time on what is attainable.

TAKING the Israeli requirement for defensible borders into account does not mean that the Arabs should be expected to concede sovereignty to Israel over the Arab population centers of Judea and Samaria and the Gaza Strip. Indeed, it is entirely possible that Israel could relinquish control over these population centers while retaining certain positions of particular strategic value but outside the populated areas, as in the Jordan Valley and the eastern foothills of Judea and Samaria. As noted earlier, the majority of Israelis would agree to such an arrangement, and there are indications that within the military establishment there is also considerable support for this approach as part of a general peace settlement.

The Begin government has a different view, and maintains that in addition to the relatively narrow security issues there are extensive historical rights to be considered. But it is unlikely that the claims to the Judean and Samarian hills, though these were the *locus classicus* of the Jewish people, can be sustained in the future. First, there is the simple fact that the majority of Israelis, though their souls may be touched by Begin's stirring call to return to the Land, value the lives of their sons more highly than the graves of their ancestors. Jewish traffic in the West Bank, never heavy, is actually on the decline, and most modern Israelis do not regard the ancient cities of Hebron, Shiloh, and Shechem (Nablus) as the heart of the modern Jewish state. The fact that most Israelis are not willing to die for Shechem as such affects the balance of power, and it tips the scales on this issue in favor of the Arabs. Begin is asserting a claim which, over the long term, most Israelis may not be willing to defend by making the necessary sacrifices.

Second, there is the so called demographic time-bomb entailed in adding the million Arabs of the West Bank and Gaza to the population under Israeli control. If the Arabs of the occupied areas are added to those of the pre-1967 territory, and if the Jewish and Arab birth rates perform as projected, there will be an Arab majority in the Jewish state within thirty years. Nor is there any sound basis for the belief that the problem will be solved by large waves of Jewish immigration. Many Israelis believe that, in his zeal to reconstruct the biblical state, Begin is actually laying the groundwork instead for a binational state. The inescapable demographic realities of the area are another reason why the historic claim cannot be sustained.

Finally, there is the problem that, if the Arabs *do* eventually offer Israel a peace with defensible borders, but insist on the return of the main Arab population centers, most Israelis will accept these terms as reasonable. For the moment, they are

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

willing to support Begin in rejecting the present Arab offer, but only because they also are not satisfied with the security provisions. If the issues of history and security are separated by future events, the domestic political situation will be different. Not just splinter groups but major centrist elements of the Israeli polity will say, let's sign the agreement.

It may be impossible for the present government to change fundamentally its position on the historic claims. But as Israelis observe the implications of their own positions during the ongoing discussions and interaction with the Arabs, and as they are forced to ask themselves which of their own demands are indispensable and which are merely desirable, a political maturation process will occur. Dramatic steps forward, when they happen, will reflect rather than precede the gradual evolution of attitudes; the impatience of critics will not accelerate but will retard the necessary changes.

III

THE United States can contribute to the evolution of steps toward peace in the Middle East, but the very belief that the U.S. holds the key to the problem may be counterproductive. The Egyptians in particular and the Arabs in general will not be prepared for a territorial compromise as long as they think Washington can "deliver" Israel on their terms. They are keenly aware of the concatenation of factors in their favor in the United States, and are liable to hold higher expectations than are warranted by the evidence. Parallels are often drawn in the Arab press between President Eisenhower's success in securing Israeli withdrawal from Sinai in 1957 and the leverage that is available to Washington today when the issue is the West Bank. This is, of course, a false parallel, but it nourishes hope. The present administration's success in getting the arms-sale package through the Senate is taken by those who seek major changes in U.S. policy as confirmation that the Jewish lobby, which they have always considered the main limitation on American freedom of action, can be beaten. The efficacy of an imposed settlement, meaning one imposed on Israel, is bound to look greater for the moment.

As Washington pursues a more active mediating role, the temptation increases to regard the United States as a direct party to the negotiations. As the American participants become involved in the details of one issue after another, and use a combination of inducements and threats to bring the Israelis and Arabs together, their role slips, or is perceived to slip, from that of mediator to that of arbitrator. For this reason, while an active mediating role for the United States is helpful for resolving a fine point at a difficult moment, or for smoothing over interruptions in the negotiating process that are bound to occur, the cumulative effect of activism is not so constructive. It reinforces the belief that Washington can and eventually will move more boldly to elicit sweeping Israeli concessions on the vital issues rather than on just the procedural and tangential obstacles. Doing less may at times be frustrating, but a final settlement may come sooner if Washington refrains from actively expediting the intermediate steps.

With regard to Israel, it is essential that the U.S. take a longer-time perspective and recognize that the necessary evolution of attitudes cannot be engineered from the outside or achieved overnight. The main consideration should be the forces that have been activated in Israel by the Sadat visit, not the exercise of levers that can only enhance the Israelis' sense of threat and strengthen the linkage between historical claims and security. It is probably too much to expect a period of benign neglect on the part of Washington, but we might restrain the more enthusiastic efforts to "save Israel in spite of herself." The American position is quite visible to Israelis, and, like Saudi influence in the United States, it will be felt without any brandishing of the big stick. On the contrary, efforts to coerce Israel directly will produce results that are precisely the opposite of what was intended, while quiet and patient efforts at persuasion will, over time, have their reward.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Paper Route

A Story

John Krich

BEING a paper boy has got to be the most demeaning job in the world, *especialmente* if you happen to be twenty-seven years old. I wasn't one for very long, and I don't even know how I got to be one. Oh yes I do. It had something to do with being unemployed. Or deciding that I was, if you know what I mean. Until I called myself unemployed, I was rolling along just fine—if a trifle undernourished. Too bad I'd insisted on calling myself something! If I'd just done without a label, I would never have been made to take the paper-boy assignment. The job wasn't forced on me by the government either, but by the people who were trying to overthrow the government.

I wouldn't say they wanted to see me working. They just needed me to aid the organization. You see, the unemployed were the ones they were organizing. I fit the bill because I'd spent so much time trying to organize other people, I'd ignored myself and ended up in the unorganized position of being without work or money for long periods of time. Since being unemployed doesn't necessarily mean not having work to do, perhaps the word "idle" would have been more apt in my case—call me the "idle poor." I'd been in organizations organizing students, youth, lumpen, political prisoners, proletarians, artists, the alienated, the ill, the unorganizable. I'd read somewhere that it was easier to organize people like yourself, and I kept looking for them. There had to be someone else like me. I kept insisting there was.

That's why I had so much hope in the Council for the Unemployed. This time, there was no doubt I was one of them, was there? I first read about the group on a handout they'd posted in the middle of a community billboard (but which community?) at the local people's bookstore (but which people?). Like a willing, and hungry, suitor, I copied down the sought-after, semi-private phone number. I pulled out my suitor's black book—in this case, looseleaf—and entered the address. When the evening for the meeting came, I washed myself in suitor's soaps and dressed myself in suitor's attire. In this case, that meant work clothes. The unemployed always wore work clothes, didn't they?

But my date's name was the Movement, and the Movement was a prude. It didn't put out so fast. It never kissed on the first date. The Movement always lived in a ramshackle, chaotic Victorian house (always the upper flat) that looked like the prow of a ship washed too soon to shore. The Movement never went outdoors, but entertained at home. A space on the floor in the largest room had been cleared, which wasn't hard to do since there was little furniture in the room. The idea was that the space would soon be filled with new recruits. If clean coffee cups could be found, something hot would be served in them. Piles of old flyers or newsletters swarmed like moths, this time toward darkness, in the corners of the room.

And this courtship was too parliamentary; it was executed with none of the passion promised by the handout that was decorated with raised fists. The masses were shy, but no efforts were made to cure them of their shyness. This romance had a flavor of bondage to it. The silent suitors were silent and the noisy leaders made noise. Those who wished to be told what to do were eventually told. Hands rose slowly and never too enthusiastically for their assigned tasks. If the hands did not rise, the hearts and heads attached to them were given orders at random. It didn't make any difference. In most cases, no one got around to doing what they said they would do. Leaflets were left undistributed in the back of VW's. Telephone lists were left undialed. Crucial books went unread. Signs remained blank, unpainted. Six-in-the-morning picketing assignments were dreamed about by those who slept through them.

It often took several meetings for the dominant personalities to emerge. But the most striking thing about my first visit to the Council for the Unemployed, aside from the absolutely authentic, panhandled look of the meeting place, was that the dominant personalities were so identifiable, and so dominant. This was what distinguished "democratic centralism," as the Movement practiced it, from the "will of the people," as America pretended to practice it: you knew at last from whom to take orders. The big man was Turk. He

JOHN KRICH, a new contributor, is a young writer living in Oakland, California.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

might have been a first-rate football player, a lineman, in his unreformed past, but now he busied himself wearing a thick mustache, one-way sunglasses (looking out), a teamster crew cut, and a full denim outfit that barely contained him down to his steel-toed boots. Turk smoked a pipe, when he wasn't talking, and though a cigar would have been more in order, the way he puffed was antiprofessorial, and engendered a sense of trust. On the lapel of his jeans jacket, he wore an oversize, quasi-ostentatious, custom-made button. On the button was a shiny, black-and-white state portrait of Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili, alias Stalin. Turk was honest about his feelings for the man. The phrase for that was "politics up front"—and though Turk was big in front, and in back, you had to wonder what was in back of what was in front. Here was a Communist for sure—his button told you so—but he didn't belong to the party. No, the old CP'ers hid Uncle Joe inside their underwear.

The only people who'd absolved the gentle Georgian of his sins to the point of displaying him as a forebear were the Maoists. I presumed that was what Turk must call himself. I also presumed that about Bill and Emily. They were the harried-looking couple whose house I presumed we were in, the presumed parents of the baby I presumed to be crying in a small antechamber off the lifeless living room. Bill and Emily nodded approvingly or buttressed eloquently most of Turk's rather straightforward directives. And that was the problem. It was always the problem. You walked into an unswept room, sat down on a couch with three legs, and all of a sudden you owed your allegiance not only to this one branch of the council, and its controlling clique, but to the controlling board of labor committees to which this group reported, and to the obscure party somewhere that sponsored the committees, which was merely a front for the sect that made the ideology (in which Turk and all the others who spoke believed), which was only a national section of one of a number of competing internationals, and that international had behind it a history of documents, debates, stands, struggles, tendencies, theoretical turning points, personalities, heretics, corrupt blocs, opportunistic splits, and a million meetings just like your own that took place in rooms you hoped were somewhat more impressive than the one in which you now found yourself. Worse than all of this, you inherited the group's enemies. However noble your motives had been for being there, someone, some rival sect, now hated you simply for that reason.

THE plans made by the council on behalf of the unemployed were sound enough. They would open a legal service to help claimants get full benefits, and they would educate the men and women in the welfare lines with a cram course on all the reasons they were waiting there, and they would encourage solidarity between the jobless and the jobbed, and it would all lead to a powerful union of non-workers who would refuse to scab and refuse to be scabbed. But these efforts occupied only a small part of the leadership's attention. They reasoned, perhaps rightfully so, that their troops were too few and too green to fight so large a battle. They wanted to organize the organizers instead, to get us all in that larger organization. Yet everyone kept up the charade. It was radical etiquette to pretend no one would dare hook anyone else, to pretend that the unemployed were our only concern.

I knew all of this and Turk and Bill and Emily soon knew I knew all of this. By my few remarks at the meeting, something about "the prime sector," or the "united-front question," they recognized me as a veteran. I had a long record of resistance to their kind of recruitment; I was a kind of confirmed follower, who didn't want to know too much about those who led me. They may have sensed, too, that I was not like them. Bill and Emily were obviously dirt poor, call it soot poor, in homage to the city. What they did have went into the council's till. There was no featherbedding around here—not even any beds. The sad, uncombed couple were even poorer than most of the people in line for compensation checks. They could not afford to drive old Caddies, or gamble away their stipend on games of three-card Molly. I had always had too much to fall back on, which kept me from organizations. But while I was still courting them, I courted them with a gift more rare than candy: my work.

That was how I got to be a paper boy. Bill and Emily ran this route on weekends: it was their only means of feeding themselves and their howling, nasty kid. Who knows? Perhaps it was the only work they could get without the employer checking up on their past activities. (Most of their fellow workers were too young to have put anything into their resumés.) It was at that first meeting, or perhaps the second, that Bill announced he and Emily had to be out of town for a few weeks so they could attend the convention of the overseeing labor committees. Someone else had to volunteer to take over their route. Whoever did it could keep the money, what money there was, so long as the job was done right, and the assignment was safeguarded for the two of them. I was not surprised to see the air above our squatted forms remain empty, void of able, willing hands upraised. First I thought, "Why doesn't Turk do it?" Then I chuckled. The answer was obvious. Even if he had made such a democratic gesture, his customers would have been frightened out of their financial sections. The sight of Turk tossing papers was soon replaced by thoughts of a small-town childhood I'd never known, as I imagined myself wheeling merrily over hill and dale on a ten-speed bike—I couldn't even ride a bike—slinging my

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rolled parcels artfully onto ever-so-graceful front porches. I saw my hand shoot into the air, where Bill seized it.

But even a paper boy has got to be trained. After the meeting, Bill explained that I'd have to follow them on their rounds to get the knack of it. The two weekends' work turned quickly into four. "We're up in a really new-jwah neighborhood," Bill told me, using his own word for the newly bourgeoisified. "If they don't get their papers laid down right where they customarily stoop for them, we're the ones who get the shit." Knowing their troubles with the council, and having seen their stately domicile, I certainly didn't want to be responsible for the further staining of Bill and Emily's shitty existence. (There was a likeable element missing from them, and they greatly underestimated how much even the proletariat liked to be liked.) At least, their sort of excrement had a kind of sanitized, moral quality to it. It didn't smell of excesses, or of butchered meat, and it wasn't heaped high around them, just spread thinly and imperceptibly over everything they knew or would come to know. But their howling little kid (clearly a mistake from their pre-revolutionary days, now rationalized as "the seed of the future") didn't see it that way. In the hot, stinking, melted plasticene back seat of their suspensionless old pushbutton Dodge—which they called "Tula"—the babe made nicely and warmly in his pants. This was good incentive for all of us to hurry a bit more urgently with my "training."

Racing from block to block, parking on strategic corners, then sprinting through apartment-building service entrances and alleyways to get their allotment of slippery newsprint distributed by the time the coffee started warming in all those new-jwah percolators, Bill and Emily looked even more pitiable. In the first light of day, the one that reveals that day's respectable lies, Bill was no longer the stern, Leninist helmsman of the ill-lit meeting room. His "worker's cut" was too short, his hair jagged and flaking. The split in his teeth that made him spit words looked less forceful and more foolish. The rasp that came with the words also seemed less easy to ignore. His starchy gray factory shirt was invaded with perspiration before an hour of the route was behind us.

Emily was getting fat and white in spite of her enforced abstinence from the kind of life that would have made her that way. Always sweating heavily, blowing wisps of thin hair from her face with puffs that could never be misunderstood as sighs or complaints, she bounced and stroked, and later changed, the child. She instructed me in the secret code by which to read the pattern of distribution from a file of index cards they carried. Each building had its keys, and master keys, and back entrances, and special orders. I thought two weekends were enough to learn it all. Maybe the dawn, and the dearth of a schoolboy's breakfast, eroded my concentration.

But when my time came to take over, I was just glad to be done with Bill and Emily and their stinking kid and all their orientation. I didn't even mind waking up at four in the morning, after a night of too much Coors-drinking and Trotsky-reading. I drove in a borrowed car to the distribution center, waiting stupidly at red lights that regulated only the passage of pack rats and unloosed pets, urban wolves of all varieties. As the garage filled with stacks of metal-banded papers, I nodded uncomfortably at my co-workers. None of them was more than half my age. They all wore baseball caps. Few of them needed a morning shave (neither did I, but for my own reasons). What was I to say to them? Unite with the unemployed! Off the bosses! Kill your parents, comrades! Eat the rich! At least, I wore the same rubber-cased sneakers they did. You needed sneakers for this job. Alone in the hilly, fashionable part of my city, with all those new-jwah trees and new-jwah condominiums with colored spotlights set against plastic shrubs neatly arranged along the blank façades of these bachelor studios, doctors' offices, or "modern" kitchenettes, I followed the indexed code as faithfully as I could recall.

I could be very faithful, and very fickle. Occasionally, a key I'd expect to work for me did not. I'd have to try every key on the ring, losing time and money, hoping no one saw me. My God, it was okay for some freckled bozo to be creeping through these buildings at six in the morning, but I was a twenty-seven-year-old terrorist! Enough with the Peter Pan jazz! What if I was shot as a burglar? Who would cover the funeral costs? Who would get the indemnity money, if there was any?

In front of one private home, a stray Doberman Pinscher was made entirely too nervous by my presence, and I was made entirely too nervous by his. I resolved to return there later, but didn't. The rest was easy, and exhausting. Why was getting older a process of finding out that nothing was ever as pleasant as you imagined it? And was this process peculiar to America? Being a paper boy wasn't a matter of whistling along happily, stopping for a Kool-Aid every time one felt a boyish thirst. It was a bitch.

This category of labor had the aura of a prank: tiptoeing through hallways with sparkled ceilings and Mantovani strings piped-in from some lulling master control, laying my bundles before closed doors with cyclops security eyes. As I raced through the "La Cabana" apartments like someone was chasing me, down the open back stairs for seven flights, struggling with the torn edges of my papers, rearranging them in my arms, the chill of morning passed through me like a spirit conjured up at a rigged seance. There was a foolishness to it, and a thanklessness, that could hardly be compared with any other work I had ever been required to do. Or heard of anyone else doing. For five hours

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of tough work, up the up staircases, carrying Sunday papers fat with glossy advertisements and the unfunny funnies, I earned the same number of dollars. One thin Lincoln, times four—while Bill and Emily were off being further drilled in their penchant for inadequacy. When I collapsed in bed that last, bright Sunday afternoon, there wasn't any way for me to feel properly tired or accomplished.

AT LEAST, and it was the least, I saved the route for Bill and Emily. It was awful in itself that they needed to be doing it so desperately, that they raised a child on it (Daddy Was a Paper Boy, Part One) or ran an organization off such a marginal form of wage slavery. But that's what it means to be unemployed. There's this fundamental state of un-ness to it, that means you need work, that you're asking for as much exploitation as you can handle. The paper route gave me the chance to figure out that I wasn't unemployed at all. I had reached an organizable age, yet I still was not quite organized. I knew this was a universe of organized systems—I had to get my input and output nice and even, credits and debits in balance, or I would be bounced right out of the ballpark. Still, I toyed with the big choice. If I organized individually, like most people did, I'd need a job, a creed, or, best of all, a family. Little mouths to feed always took care of a lot of organizing for you. But I couldn't find a job, didn't trust creeds, and found families a bit sticky, so I kept tampering with the collective approach. I had to go on looking for something big, beyond myself, a reorganization not just of my own means but of those available to everyone. The best that could be said for this approach was that it certainly had no foreseeable finish.

Breaking up with an organization is often more harrowing than breaking up with a woman, but it wasn't this time. I just stopped going to meetings. And Bill and Emily never phoned me. Perhaps they knew I'd made my contribution to their fight, and could be expected to make no more. In my place would rise another candidate whose hunger would be measured. They might also have sensed my particular un-ness, my slackened taste for socially useful tasks. Whatever it was, they simply accepted my decision to leave the council. They had my phone number all right, I know they did, but they never bothered to try it. Maybe Bill and Emily just weren't very organized.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Rx for the Novel

Joseph Epstein

OUGHT critics to prescribe what art should be? Probably not—but try stopping them. From Aristotle instructing upon those qualities which will satisfy the definition of a tragedy to F.R. Leavis examining novels for evidence of moral seriousness (and generally not finding it), critics have attempted to lay down the law. But art, whether for better or for worse, will not be bound by critical law. It is more various than criticism; there are, quite simply, more things in novels and poems and plays than are dreamt of in all of criticism. And genius, on those rare occasions when it occurs, is by definition the ability to produce something over and above any rule. Which is not to say that theoretical criticism has no place. "Theory and practice," Goethe wrote, "always act upon each other: one can see from their works what is the opinion of men, and, from their opinions, predict what they will do." When practice, art itself, seems badly out of whack —as by and large it does in our day —it is time to investigate the theory behind it.

The problem is not an absence, or even a shortage, of literary theory. As more than 95 per cent of all the scientists who have ever lived are said to be alive today, so more than 95 per cent of all the literary critics who have ever lived are also alive today—with the consequence that there are probably more bad literary ideas in the air than ever before in history. Structuralism, with its literary subdivision of semiotics, is merely the leading bad idea of the moment. But there are, and will be, others. Anyone who looks into the current academic literary journals—*Critical Inquiry, Diacritics, PMLA*—knows how far off the main road literary theory has traveled. Reading these journals, one begins to think, as George Orwell remarked in another context, that "the restatement of the obvious is the first duty of intelligent men."

In *On Moral Fiction*,* the novelist John Gardner has written a book that is in some respects—and self-admittedly—a restatement of the obvious. Gardner believes that "we are living, for all practical purposes, in an age of mediocre art." Chief among the reasons for this is that, "on the whole, our serious novelists, like our painters and composers, are short on significant belief." Significant belief, he argues, has been eroded by much in modern thought, not least by the pessimism of Sartre, the linguistic cautiousness of Wittgenstein, and the determinism of Freud ("at least as he is popularly read"). "Great art," Gardner writes, "celebrates life's potential, offering a vision unmistakably and unsentimentally rooted in love." Moreover: "art asserts . . . an ultimate rightness of things which it does not pretend to understand in the philosopher's way but which it nevertheless can understand and show mankind."

For the most part, John Gardner's point of view on art is Tolstoyan—the Tolstoy, chiefly, of the essays on Guy de Maupassant, S. T. Semënov, and "On Art," and of the book *What is Art?* As with Tolstoy, so with Gardner, the word "moral" has to be distinguished from the word "moralism," which can be construed as the didactic aim to turn us, through obvious example and easy precept, into somehow better human beings. Gardner, again like Tolstoy, does indeed think art ought to make us better, at any rate in deepening our understanding of the world, but not in the way of the *McGuffey Reader*. The morality to which Gardner refers is bound up with aesthetic judgment. Or, as Tolstoy put it, a significant work of art "discloses something new and at the same time in some degree satisfies the three conditions: content, form, and sincerity." By these three conditions Tolstoy meant that a work of art should "contribute what is good to humanity," must be of a clarity such that all may understand it, and must be produced by the artist's inner need.

Obvious though this formulation may seem—except for the point about clarity, which with modernist works has been abandoned—it has not been accepted as obvious for a very long while. Much has conduced to cause it to fall into neglect. Politically, the struggle against censorship—an institution which Tolstoy himself greatly abhorred—made it necessary to argue that works of art could do no real harm. No book, it used to be rather glibly asserted, could seduce a girl; no musical composition start a revolution; no museum, however chockful of obscene paintings, lower the morality of a community. But if art were incapable of harm, how could it be assumed capable of good? In literature, the New Critics of America and England nearly conceded that it could not; a poem, they contended, should not mean but be. What remained, therefore, was a

JOSEPH EPSTEIN *is the editor of the* American Scholar *and a frequent contributor to* COMMENTARY. *His recent articles include "Paul Goodman in Retrospect" (February 1978), "What Makes Vidal Run" (June 1977), and "Rediscovering Mencken" (April 1977).*

* Basic Books, 214 pp., $8.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

conception of art as something whose mechanics might be worth inquiring into—at least to the extent of examining an artist's work to discover his intentions and how he went about realizing them—but certainly not its consequences, which were somehow tacitly assumed to be ennobling.

In the 1960's, this conventional academic wisdom came under frontal assault as intrinsically conservative by literary radicals on behalf of a "higher" morality—their own, which held that art ought to be used as a weapon to change society in the direction they favored. Although this view did not win the day, criticism, in response to it, switched its tack. Art, especially literature, became a different kind of academic plaything, an object to be put through semiotic exercises, or searched for its "unmediated vision," or dealt arcane "misreadings," with attention deflected from the purpose of the work onto the "performing self" of the artist.

ART is either morally serious, John Gardner claims, or it is an amusing hobby, a pleasant enough pastime but little more. Of Donald Barthelme, he writes: "The world would be a duller place without him, as it would be without F.A.O. Schwarz." This is hard, but probably necessary, especially in a time such as our own, when novelists are often judged significant by the extent to which their work allows critics and teachers to gas on about it in orgies of explication. The perennial problem that art presents to criticism, though currently shunted aside, is to distinguish between trivial and important art, between bad and good art. In his novel *The Painter of Signs*, R. K. Narayan has a character, a simple Indian sign-painter, of whom he writes: "He had a general philosophy of books—all the classification that mattered was good books and bad books."

For Tolstoy, and for John Gardner after him, the distinction between the two resides in moral content. Crucial for Tolstoy was to determine whether the artist has "a correct, that is a moral, relation to the subjects depicted." A correct "moral relation," in Tolstoy's view, includes "a knowledge of the difference between good and evil"; and a novelist ought to be concerned with questions of right and wrong, and come down on the side of right. Thus Tolstoy was very critical of Maupassant because "he loved and described things that should not have been loved and described."

To follow the Tolstoyan line in these matters carries certain burdens. Tolstoy's writings on art all came after his famous conversion, and hence after he had renounced his own major novels. The early Tolstoy—perhaps the greatest novelist who has ever lived—did not pass the critical muster of the later, Christianized Tolstoy. An additional burden is Tolstoyan prudery, which could be extreme. *What is Art?* begins with Tolstoy describing an opera rehearsal and decrying the state of semi-undress of the singers backstage as well as the "bare arm" of another singer engaged in a mock sword fight; the ballet accompanying the opera he called "simply a lewd performance." Tolstoy's morality, moreover, had a center in Christianity, and not alone in Christianity's ethical import but in Jesus Christ. The meaning of life, the older Tolstoy averred, "was explained eighteen hundred years ago by Christianity, simply, clearly, indubitably, and joyfully, as is proved by the lives of all who acknowledge it and follow the guidance of life which results from that conception."

John Gardner does not shoulder these Tolstoyan burdens. Although a Christian, he is neither bound by Tolstoy's quite strictly conceived Christianity, nor taken up overmuch by questions of prudery. For him morality in art resides in the process of art. His description of this process is far and away the most interesting part of *On Moral Fiction*. Fiction at its best, he maintains, is "a way of thinking, a philosophical method." The method is one of discovery. Working through a logic that is in no way abstract, the novelist makes discoveries of an often surprising kind, which are owing to his need to adhere to the internal consistency of his tale. Frequently, because of his allegiance to the inner truth of this tale, he must change his mind about previously held convictions in mid-composition; frequently, too, he ends up elsewhere than he intended when he first set out. (Robert Frost once said that he never wrote a good poem whose conclusion he knew in advance.) The need to trust to his tale also causes the writer to distrust all established doctrine—philosophical, political, psychological—and to eschew received opinions and conventional wisdom. "The writer's sole authority," Gardner writes, "is his imagination."

BUT none of this can come to much if the writer is not large-hearted. He must begin, in Gardner's view, with great reserves of compassion and a hunger for truth—truth of a subtler kind than is normally encompassed by the term didacticism. "Didacticism inevitably simplifies morality and thus misses it." At times the writer may be reasonable and calm; at other times he may be passionate and angry; but always he needs to be wise and sane, and always, too, he affirms life and he values that which enhances it. The process of creating significant art is thus at bottom a process of searching for moral correctness.

Where the reader fits into this scheme is through sharing the writer's discoveries. "A work of art is then finished," according to Tolstoy, "when it has been brought to such clearness that it communicates itself to others and evokes in them the same feeling that the artist experienced while creating it." Gardner rings a few changes on this Tolstoyan notion of the transfer of feeling from artist to audience. He believes that when we read a novel we do so "for the pleasure of exercising our capacity to love." Elaborating on this, he writes: "We read or listen to or look at works of art in the hope of experiencing our highest, most selfless emotion, either to reach a sublime communication with the maker of the work, sharing his affirmations as common lovers do, or find, in works of literature, characters we love as we do

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

real people." As for criticism, the formal response to a work of art, true criticism, in Gardner's view, though it sometimes needs to discuss technique, ought finally to be concerned with ends; it needs, that is to say, to be "morally judgmental," or ultimately interested in the quality of a work's affirmations.

SUCH, in outline, is John Gardner's theory of moral fiction; such is his restatement of the obvious. But is the obvious so obvious? The first thing to ask about a theory of literature is, what does it exclude? The first thing that John Gardner's theory of moral fiction excludes—or in any case overlooks—is the attraction that immoral or amoral characters exert in fictional works, an attraction not alone on readers but on writers. In a recent interview in the English journal, the *New Review*, Dan Jacobson was asked if, as a novelist, he fantasizes more about evil than about good. He answered:

> I would say that the evidence of literature suggests that we all do. More intensely, anyway. Look at Dickens, for example. Give him somebody he disapproves of morally and the novel usually comes alive. Give him the person of whom he approves and all too often the whole thing dies. In *Dombey and Son* it's clear that he's morally opposed to Dombey's pride and money-mania. But it's also clear that, creatively speaking, he loves Dombey. He can't have enough of him. He's fascinated by the way Dombey speaks or sits down on a couch. In that sense, he loves Dombey much more than he loves Florence, who is so good and self-sacrificing and wins out in the end. My point is that in any worthwhile literary work the balance between condemnation and complicity is a much more intricate affair than one would ever guess from reading most of the critics.

This is most persuasive, especially coming from a practicing novelist of Dan Jacobson's moral earnestness. But why is the representation of goodness in literature so difficult and, with only a handful of exceptions (Billy Budd, Prince Myshkin), so boring? Even Tolstoy complained about the end of Flaubert's story, *"La légende de Julien l'hospitalier,"* in which the hero lies down with the leper who is Christ; "I feel," Tolstoy said, "that the author himself would not have done, and would not even have wished to do, what his hero does, and therefore I myself do not wish to do it and do not experience any agitation when reading of this amazing exploit." So it often turns out with Dickens's heroines—Florence in *Dombey and Son*, Agnes in *David Copperfield*, Lucie Manette in *A Tale of Two Cities*—and even occasionally, in *War and Peace*, Natasha: the goodness gets a bit thick. Perhaps Tolstoy himself came closest to explaining why this is so when, in a passage he later deleted from *What is Art?*, he wrote: "Goodness is that which cannot be defined by anything else but which defines everything else."

Not that this invalidates John Gardner's theory of moral fiction. He asks, after all, for more than the display of goodness in fiction. But it does point up the difficulty of theorizing comprehensively about a form so elusive as the novel. No greater proof of this difficulty is to be found than in Gardner's own judgments about novelists. Scatter-shot though most of them are, these judgments fill the pages of *On Moral Fiction*, and are easily the most disappointing parts of the book. More than disappointing, they throw all the rest in doubt. How, one asks, can such sound theory result in such bad practice?

Most critical theory is written to tally with an already existing canon of art, but in John Gardner's case something like the reverse is true: having set up a theory, he feels the legitimate need to find a canon to go with it. Rather like the ecologist who is strong on the attack, Gardner is slashing enough in going after the novelists he dislikes, but again like the ecologist, who is generally so disappointing in demonstrating how things ought to be done, Gardner is rather less than impressive in putting forth those novelists he admires.

If *On Moral Fiction* has a hero, an exemplary figure among contemporary novelists, then that novelist is John Fowles, and the novel of Fowles which Gardner seems particularly to admire is his most recent, *Daniel Martin*.* But this, if one happens to have read *Daniel Martin*, presents an immediate problem. In *Daniel Martin* John Fowles has written a novel with a happy (that is to say, affirmative) ending, but its ending is the only happy thing about it. Lumpily organized, overly lush in language, Fowles's novel goes on its logorrheic way for more than 600 pages to reach a conclusion that is altogether dissatisfying for being so predictable. *Daniel Martin* is a novel of the kind that Tolstoy might have called "brain-spun"—a willed novel, a novel in part about the modern novel, a novel as unearned in its affirmation as Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* is in its nihilism. What Gardner all too clearly likes in Fowles is his anti-antinomian strain. He quotes the narrator of *Daniel Martin* as saying:

> To hell with cultural fashion; to hell with elitist guilt; to hell with existential nausea; and above all, to hell with the imagined that does not say, not only in, but behind the images, the real!

The sentiments are admirable. But in a novel of epic length, whose central conflict is whether the narrator, a middle-aged screenwriter, should marry a young starlet or can persuade a woman of his own age to marry him, they are a sharp reminder of Gide's adage that fine sentiments do not make fine art.

BY THE same token, many sentences in John Gardner's postulation of his theory of moral fiction bring to mind no contemporary novelist quite so vividly as Saul Bellow. Gardner writes, for example, that the effect of artistic truth "is to conjure by incantation what the art receiver may have lost touch with, his own best nature, his affirmations." Or again: "Art is our

* See the review by Pearl K. Bell, "The English Sickness," COMMENTARY, January 1978.—ED.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

way of keeping track of what we know and have known, secretly, from the beginning." These sentences instantly call up—at least to my mind—Bellow's Artur Sammler, at the end of *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, over the corpse of his nephew Elya Grunner, mentally whispering:

> He was aware that he must meet, and he did meet—through all the confusion and degraded clowning of this life through which we are speeding—he did meet the terms of his contract. The terms which, in his inmost heart, each man knows. As I know mine. As we all know. For that is the truth of it—that we all know, God, that we know, we know, we know.

"The artist's affirmation," Gardner writes, "or, more precisely, his search for affirmation, is the work of art." This sentence could stand as a gloss on Saul Bellow's career.

Yet John Gardner does not think well of Bellow. On the contrary, Bellow is the one major writer whom he attacks in a concentrated way in *On Moral Fiction*. He thinks Bellow is "actually not a novelist at heart but an essayist disguised as a writer of fiction." He finds his novels too talky, too much given over to his own opinions. He allows that "Bellow can still feel unabashed concern," but "the fact remains that Bellow's novels come off in the end as sprawling works of advice, not art." Now, whatever Saul Bellow's imperfections—and many feel that he has yet to write that single novel which will stand as the masterwork in fiction of our age—no one is read with more respect by a serious public than he. The reasons for this are not that Bellow is a brilliant essayist, or entertainer, or an Ann Landers for intellectuals, but because among contemporary novelists his novels have exactly the quality Gardner's theory extols—the quality, that is, of moral gravity. "Criticism," said H. L. Mencken, "is prejudice made plausible." Or, as with Gardner on Fowles and Bellow, implausible.

If Gardner's criticisms of contemporary novelists are often implausible, neither are they very courageous. Vladimir Nabokov, for example, ought to be somewhere near the center of the argument of *On Moral Fiction*, since he has, in interviews and in his novels, disdained the traditionally moral view of literature. Obviously it would not do to class Nabokov with Donald Barthelme, as an entertainment. But all Gardner offers is a sideswipe: "Yet to attack a work of fiction on moral grounds seems now almost unthinkable. Who but an ignoramus would disparage *Ada* because of Nabokov's merry, diabolical lie when he tells us our great charitable institutions were originally set up as whorehouses?" That is the end of it—a case less of criticism than of hit-and-run.

It is one thing to go after the Barths and Barthelmes and Pynchons, and shoot away at them as at fish in a barrel, but quite another to discover who spawned them, those bigger fish, and then go after them. These bigger fish are the pantheon of modernist writers: Joyce, Kafka, Gertrude Stein, and Company. While the modernists cannot accurately be said to speak in a single voice, nevertheless from their chorus a message does come through: it is that bourgeois society is finished, and that all efforts to revive it through a traditional morality will prove unavailing. But Gardner does not seriously engage the modernists in his argument. When he mentions them at all, he does so—with the partial exception of Samuel Beckett—for the most part approvingly. He ranges wide but does not cut very deep. He approves of Dante but not of Ron Sukenick. The hard cases he simply does not fight.

The moral of *On Moral Fiction* may be that, in literature, a theory too carefully laid down and followed out can only end, for novelists and for critics, in bad practice. No first-class novelist ever wrote under a strict theory of fiction. Henry James's famous prefaces, prepared for the New York edition of his novels, were written after the novels themselves, and these prefaces, penetrating though they be, are (as Van Wyck Brooks once remarked) chiefly useful as instructions for reading and writing Jamesian novels. Tolstoy wrote one novel, *Resurrection*, in thrall to his theory of fiction, and it is, as Gardner concedes, a lesser novel than those written without such a theory. But the problem is that, should sound theory step aside, it will almost certainly be replaced by bad theory. No winning for losing here.

What *On Moral Fiction* does make clear is the need for a criticism of fiction that is judgmental. By now, surely, we have come near the end of the trail of interpretation: a recent bibliography of Kafka lists books and articles in excess of 10,000; one on James Joyce could scarcely contain many fewer; and Virginia Woolf has now become, in criticism, a full-blown industry unto herself. We now know what these writers and many more are all about, as well as knowing all about them. What we still do not know is how good they are: whether, after all the interpretations are in, they significantly add to or subtract from life.

In a much-cited quotation, Flaubert, one of the founding fathers of modern literary art, said: "Life is so hideous that the only way of enduring it is to avoid it. And it may be avoided by living in art, in ceaseless search for truth rendered by beauty." But in our day art has been proved to be no adequate hiding place, and the time is at hand to reverse Flaubert's terms and begin the search for beauty rendered by truth.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stravinsky's Stature

Samuel Lipman

Less than a decade after Igor Stravinsky's death in 1971, just two months short of his eighty-ninth birthday, the essential verdict on his music is in. That verdict, arrived at, as always, by audiences and performers alike, is really no different from the consensus about Stravinsky which had been developing for a half-century. Three pieces of his first maturity—the famous Diaghilev ballets written before the composer had passed thirty—have become components of the familiar repertory the world over; the music of his middle age is fairly widely performed, and found interesting by the intellectually cultivated but cold by the musically more enthusiastic; the work of his old age is almost unplayed except at ceremonial occasions in honor of the composer or at performances of modern music and ballet.

And yet, despite this longstanding and widespread judgment of his stature—a judgment which is, to say the least, a highly qualified one—Stravinsky during his lifetime enjoyed a greater degree of celebrity and adulation than any other serious composer in our century, tremendous financial success, and the continual high regard of both music lovers and professionals. What was said about Stravinsky at his death had already been said many times before—that in him one saw the profession of master musician at its highest, in him one saw the rare intersection of talent, longevity, and well-deserved honors.

The extraordinary literary interest which Stravinsky evoked in the years close to the end of his life was symptomatic of the general view. Not only was he the admired subject of musical journalism, but he himself emerged as an author of repute. Beginning in 1959 and continuing for ten years, a series of books—six in the United States—appeared, containing his thoughts, table talk, obiter dicta, musical explications, and recollections of youth. The man portrayed through the medium of these hundreds of thousands of words is bright, witty, intellectually informed, waspish, nostalgic, unforgiving, even at times sentimental. Altogether, the books are both a tribute to the wisdom of old age and a remarkable example of a genius retaining his faculties intact long past the age when others are dead or senile.

These books, however, are not the work of the composer alone, nor were they ever claimed to be. They were co-authored by Stravinsky's constant companion since 1948, the American musician and writer Robert Craft. Indeed, the second half of each of the last three books to appear in American editions consists of diaries kept by the younger man during his association with the master; these diaries, amplified and with added material describing Stravinsky's very last years and death, appeared in 1972 under Craft's name with the title *Stravinsky: Chronicle of a Friendship 1948/1971*. What the composer came to mean to the young musician as employer, patron, tyrant, friend, and surrogate father is movingly described, and the cumulative effect of these accounts of prosperity and decline approaches the power of imaginative literature.

But history being the cruel selector it is, attention has inevitably come to be focused less on what Stravinsky meant to Craft than on what Craft may have meant to Stravinsky. From musical secretary and youthful presence, Craft became by an insensible progress both a ghost writer and a performing collaborator who would prepare the orchestra and conduct part of the program during Stravinsky's increasingly frequent and profitable appearances. More and more he appeared as Stravinsky's spokesman, and toward the end he himself became a kind of public substitute for Stravinsky, conducting his works on recordings described (not always accurately) as having been made in the composer's presence and under his supervision. At Stravinsky's funeral in Venice, Craft was, next to the composer's wife, perhaps the chief mourner. Since then, he has become the louring presence of Stravinsky scholarship, with access, one assumes, to the material he knows better than anyone else.

The results of Craft's work are visible not only in the diaries but also in the range and breadth, the wit and energy, of those parts of the books co-signed by Stravinsky. The portrait of the artist presented by these productions is so captivating that perhaps only an exceptionally trusting reader could ever have fully believed they were true collaborations. In any case, what seemed doubtful to some on the basis at least of Stravinsky's creaky English and deteriorating health, and what had become the subject of much gossip in the music business, became a matter of open discussion in May 1969, when Donal Henahan published a famous non-interview with the composer in the New York *Times*. While Craft conducted the interview, the almost eighty-seven-year-old composer sat silent, hunched, abstracted from the proceedings, seemingly immersed in some music he was writing. The general impression was of a man

Samuel Lipman *is* Commentary's *regular music critic and a pianist. This summer he will be playing works by Beethoven, Liszt, Ravel, Reger, Poulenc, and Shostakovich at the Aspen (Colorado) and Waterloo (New Jersey) Music Festivals.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

withdrawn forever into his own thoughts and beyond the capacity for verbal communication. Yet still the trenchant *morceaux* representing Stravinsky's very words continued to appear. The last may well have been an interview in the *New York Review of Books*, published after his death, in which Stravinsky discussed fluently—as late as four days before the end—his condition, medicine, music, and even life and death itself.

WHAT can be said about the collaboration? According to Lillian Libman, who has described Stravinsky's last years from her standpoint as his secretary, business and household manager, and part-time companion, Craft had increasingly assumed an independent role in the relationship, and by the end the work was pure Craft, with Stravinsky only a passive and trapped onlooker, able, at most, to give approval to what was being done in his name. Her charges have in general been denied by Craft, who in any case might understandably plead the necessity of keeping Stravinsky alive and functioning. Not surprisingly, discussion about the authenticity of the material produced under the joint byline of the two men goes on to this day.

This controversy would matter less, and indeed be restricted to the question of the composer's last years, were it not for the remarkable fact that Stravinsky's final literary collaboration was by no means his first. His two earlier books—the reserved and distant *Autobiography* (1935-36) and the Norton Lectures at Harvard, *Poetics of Music* (1939)—were also not solely Stravinsky's productions. By the testimony of the third of his books with Craft, his "*Autobiography* and *Poetics of Music* [were] both written through other people—Walter Nouvel and Roland-Manuel, respectively—[and] are much less like me, in all my faults, than my conversations; or so I think." Elsewhere he acknowledged the help of the music theorist Pierre Suvchinsky in drafting the Russian original of the *Poetics*.

All in all, then, the evidentiary value of Stravinsky's large literary output seems diminished. Any citation from it, no matter of how "authentic"-seeming a statement, will inevitably inspire the question: is this what Stravinsky himself thought? Thus, whatever the great cultural and musical interest of these writings, the only sure testimony to Stravinsky's achievement and significance must be founded upon a consideration of his work as a composer, rather than as a littérateur or guru.

As a musician, Igor Feodorovich Stravinsky was not the product of routine academic training. He was born in the small Russian summer resort of Oranienbaum in 1882, and though his social origins were of the gentry, his father was a well-known bass and one of Tchaikowsky's favorite performers. The young Igor was hardly precocious musically, and the piano lessons he took went reasonably well if not brilliantly. Under parental pressure he studied law at St. Petersburg University, but he seems to have had little taste for any life but that of music. On his own he began to study counterpoint when he was eighteen, and in 1902 he asked Rimsky-Korsakov—the father of a classmate at the university—for advice about his ambitions to be a composer. Rimsky-Korsakov seems to have taken the neophyte seriously, and offered to work with him privately and without fee in harmony and counterpoint. He was to be Stravinsky's only real teacher.

There are few surviving juvenilia of Stravinsky in which we may observe the man prefigured in the child. An early piano sonata (1903-04) is lost, and the earliest works we can hear today are the song suite—to words by Pushkin—*Faun and Shepherdess* (1906) and the Symphony in E-flat (1905-07). Both these compositions, though graceful to perform and pleasant to hear, are derivative, reminding the listener by turns of Wagner, Tchaikowsky, Glazunov, Debussy, Richard Strauss, and, of course, Rimsky-Korsakov. Much the same can be said of the *Scherzo Fantastique* (1907-08).

But the lightning strike which was to change Stravinsky's life was now close at hand. It came at the first performance in June 1909 of his new and very short orchestral fantasy, *Fireworks*. In the audience—in addition to the conservative Glazunov, who remarked at the end, "no talent, only dissonance"—was the legendary Sergei Diaghilev, the larger-than-life impresario of all the arts and the founder of the Ballets Russes. Today, it is possible to see Diaghilev's achievement in bringing Russian culture into the European world through France as the cultural analogue of the Franco-Russian alliance; at the time, his role in making dance the vehicle for primitive art and advanced thought in music and painting seemed both revolutionary and original. Diaghilev invited Stravinsky, on the basis of *Fireworks*, to write for the Ballets Russes. The first real fruit of this engagement was the famous *Firebird* (1909-10). The premiere starred the great Karsavina, with scenario and choreography by Fokine, and costumes and scenery by Golovine and Bakst.

In many ways *Firebird* is atypical of the mature Stravinsky, for it bears a large resemblance to the gorgeous orientalism of the Russian national school of which Rimsky-Korsakov was the leader. For its major melodic material it relies on Russian folk song, and the entire effect is traditional rather than modern. Never again was Stravinsky to write a piece so clearly a part of 19th-century romanticism.

While working on *Firebird* he had conceived the idea for a ballet based on a primitive sacrifice in pagan Russia, but before he got to work out this idea he decided to write a musical portrait of an ugly and downcast puppet who is rejected in love and finally momentarily resurrected in spectral triumph. At the outset, Stravinsky envisioned what was soon to become *Petrushka* (1910-11) as a kind of *Konzertstück* for piano and orchestra, and in the completed version the piano remains highly important. Though folk song remains influential in *Petrushka*, the impression it made—and still makes—is that of modern, i.e., dissonantal music. Particularly striking is its

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

use of bitonality, in this case through the superimposition of two different chords, C and F-sharp major. And here for the first time the rhythmic movement, in its aggressive variety and complexity, can be called Stravinskyan.

BUT of course it was the *Rite of Spring* (1911-13) that made Stravinsky a famous international composer. The story of its notorious premiere has often been told; indeed, as a tale of the violent encounter of the avant-garde with the reactionary forces of bourgeois philistinism it constitutes one of the central myths of modernism. Several reasons for the famous ruckus can be identified; the story—one of barbarous religious practice—was shocking in itself, and so too was Nijinsky's choreography, at once original, clumsy, and incompetent. What has remained in the collective mind of our age, however, is the impact of the music, starting with the almost shapeless folk tune played above the customary range of the solo bassoon to which it is assigned. And from start to finish the pulse, both irregular and savagely insistent, broke new ground in the use of rhythm as a central structural factor independent of the particular notes and sonorities which carry it.

After the first scandalous success of the *Rite of Spring*, Stravinsky—never one to overwork an artistic mine—returned to complete an opera, *The Nightingale*, which he had begun in 1908. The long interruption in his work on this opera resulted in a sizable stylistic discrepancy between the earlier and later sections, the products respectively of the pre- and post-*Rite* Stravinsky. In this connection it is significant that when the composer later (1917) came to make a concert suite out of the opera, he dropped the entire first act, which in its opening measures had contained an almost literal quotation from Debussy's *Clouds* (1893-99); this borrowing, along with the resemblance between the opening of the *Rite* and the introductory flute solo of Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* (1892-94), demonstrates something of the influence of Debussy on Stravinsky's development.

He now began to write a number of works quite different from the three Diaghilev ballets in their smallness of scale, dryness of timbre, clarity of texture, and seeming simplicity of ambition. Especially consequential were the *Three Pieces for String Quartet* (1914), which foreshadowed the lean Stravinsky of the 1920's and 1930's. To a large extent this new emphasis on self-limitation was encouraged by the dislocations attendant upon World War I. Stravinsky spent much of the war in Switzerland, where he no longer had access to the great platform of the Ballets Russes.

Exile from Russia did not at first alter his interest in folk subjects; *Reynard*, a ballet with singing, was written in 1915-16, but not performed until 1922; its intimacy and its brevity have not proved helpful in securing it wide performance. The same could not be said of another Russian-inspired work, *The Wedding* (1914-23). In a daring innovation it uses four pianos and a large percussion section to provide the background for song and dance settings of peasant marriage customs. The combination of dry timbres and exotic ruralism has proved piquant without being unsettling to audiences.

More important—because it showed the composer's interest in going beyond even a new-sounding nationalist music—was the *Soldier's Tale* (1918). Though originally based on a Russian folk tale, this story of a soldier who sells his soul (in the form of his violin) to the devil was purposely broadened by Stravinsky and his French-Swiss librettist C. F. Ramuz to make it international in meaning. And its clean sound and brittle atmosphere, so appropriate to a composition written during wartime in a neutral country, pointed the way toward Stravinsky's new aesthetic, which was to remain in many ways essentially unchanged for the rest of his life.

IT WAS now clear that the same *Rite of Spring* which had brought great fame to Stravinsky had also been the last of his sonic blockbusters. The dilemma which faced Stravinsky was sensitively perceived, more than fifty years after the fact, by the American critic and composer Virgil Thomson:

> After giving to the world between 1909 and 1913 three proofs of colossally expanding power—*Firebird*, *Petrushka*, and the *Rite of Spring*—he found himself unable to expand farther. And since, like Picasso, he was still to go on living, and since he could not imagine living without making music, he too was faced with an unhappy choice. He could either make music out of his own past (which he disdained to do) or out of music's past (which he is still [1967] doing). For both men, when expansion ceased, working methods became their subject.

The earliest clear sign of Stravinsky's new preoccupation with an already established music was his reworking of the compositions of Pergolesi, in the ballet *Pulcinella* (1919-20). Once again Diaghilev played a role in the composer's creative process, this time by actually recommending Pergolesi as a subject for Stravinsky's efforts. The result is one of Stravinsky's most delightful and ingratiating works. In an illustration of the ability of the present to reconstruct the past, much of *Pulcinella*, which sounded harsh and artificial on its appearance, now seems the very model of proper Baroque performance practice.

For the next three decades Stravinsky continued his reworkings of the past in modern dress, now concentrating on one style, now on another. His sympathies were by no means confined to the pre-romantic ethos, despite the implications of the term "neoclassicism" which is usually applied to Stravinsky's borrowings. His *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (1920) was dedicated to the memory of Debussy; the opera buffa *Mavra* (1921-22) was modeled on the vocal styles of his Russian precursors Glinka, Dargomijsky, and Tchaikowsky. The works for piano—the *Concerto for Piano and Wind Orchestra* (1923-24), the *Sonata* (1924), and the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Serenade in A (1925)—showed a deep interest in the keyboard music of Bach and Scarlatti and a particular fondness for imitating on the modern piano the timbre, articulation, and dynamism of the harpsichord.

Most unexpected, considering Stravinsky's very real reservations about the romantic afflatus of Tchaikowsky, was his adaptation of many little-known piano pieces and songs by that hero of musical self-expression, and his combining them into a full-length ballet, *The Fairy's Kiss* (1928). In this piece, the identification with the spirit of Tchaikowsky is so complete that it is often difficult to tell where the original leaves off and Stravinsky begins.

His creative emulations were not limited to musical models. In *Oedipus Rex* (1926-27), Stravinsky decided upon Latin for the text of a large-scale dramatic work, because Latin was a language partially ossified and associated as well with dogmatic religion. Greek myth, sung in Latin, was yoked to a running commentary in French, the whole written by the very modern and up-to-date Jean Cocteau. This *aggiornamento* of the archaic Greek world continued in one of Stravinsky's most lyrically beautiful pieces, the ballet *Apollo Musagetes* (1927-28), and also in the less successful but equally attractive ballet with song and narration, *Persephone* (1933-34). At this time Stravinsky was involved, through his music, in the public proclamation of his deep religious faith. His *Symphony of Psalms* (1930) was, in the words of its dedication, "composed to the glory of God"; the three psalms progress from fearful prayer to jubilation, and are expressed musically by modal harmony, a Bach-style double fugue in the second movement, and a final radiant C-major chord.

Although the *Violin Concerto* (1931) is not easily traced to an original, it was strikingly influenced by his own *Capriccio* (1928-29) for piano and orchestra, itself a tribute to the pianistic display of works by Weber and Mendelssohn. One of Stravinsky's most influential and formally strongest works, the *Concerto for Two Solo Pianos* (1931-35), combines melody and energy in the first movement while the second movement is a strongly Italianate *Notturno*, the third is a set of four variations, and the finale is a powerful fugue which appears at the end in an inverted form reminiscent of the close of Beethoven's Sonata in A-flat, opus 110.

The build-up of political and military tensions in the years immediately prior to the outbreak of war in 1939 seems hardly to have found expression in Stravinsky's music. The happy and light ballet *Game of Cards* (1936)—recorded by Stravinsky with the Berlin Philharmonic in 1938, the same year his music was condemned by the Nazis as degenerate art—is the story of a poker game, with the characters being the important cards in the deck; the music sparkles with allusions to such composers as Rossini, Delibes, and again Tchaikowsky. The *Dumbarton Oaks Concerto* (1937-38), written, as was *Apollo Musagetes*, for an American commission, was described by the composer as "a little concerto in the style of the *Brandenburg Concertos*." The *Symphony in C* (1938-40) commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the Chicago Symphony; it too is optimistic, despite the almost concurrent deaths of Stravinsky's first wife, mother, and one of his daughters, and his forced exile from Europe in 1939.

Stravinsky's wartime pieces, written during the first years of his residence in Hollywood, present a picture of a lion trying to tame himself. He turned his hand abortively to movie music, including a film on the Nazi invasion of Norway and Franz Werfel's *The Song of Bernadette*. Neither project worked out; but some of the music was eventually used—the sketches for the film on Norway ended up as part of the *Four Norwegian Moods* (1942), and the *Bernadette* music saw the light of day in the *Symphony in Three Movements* (1942-45). Several works were written to improbable commissions; among these, the *Circus Polka* (1942), to be danced by elephants, was supplied for the Barnum and Bailey Circus, while *Babel* (1944) was paid for by the Hollywood composer and publisher Nathaniel Shilkret as part of a biblical suite by various hands, including Arnold Schoenberg and Darius Milhaud, with ideas (never realized) for other sections from Béla Bartók, Paul Hindemith, and Sergei Prokofiev.

About this time, Stravinsky once again became interested in jazz (he had earlier, in 1918 and 1919, written piano pieces based on ragtime, whose influence may also be noticed in the *Piano and Wind Concerto*); the *Ebony Concerto* (1945) was written for the Woody Herman Band. The *Concerto in D* (1946), dedicated to Paul Sacher's Basle Chamber Orchestra, marked Stravinsky's return to the European musical world. Lincoln Kirstein commissioned another ballet on a Greek theme, *Orpheus* (1947). And Stravinsky wrote a *Mass* (1944-48), not for the Russian Orthodox Church of his boyhood, but in Latin for liturgical use in the Roman Catholic rite. However much these pieces vary from one to another, and however imbued they all are with Stravinsky's typical freshness and life, they are little different in style, scope, and musical purpose from the work he had been doing since the *Rite of Spring* thirty-five years earlier.

To summarize this long period of neoclassicism, one final work remained to be written. Into it went so much talent, effort, and even genius—and not from Stravinsky alone—that it seems a pity the resulting composition constitutes but one more sacrifice on the altar of the mythical great modern opera. *The Rake's Progress*, based on scenes from Hogarth paintings and written to a libretto by W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman, occupied Stravinsky from 1947 to 1951. In style it draws constantly on the formal devices of traditional non-Wagnerian opera, such as aria, recitative, chorus, and ensembles. It is also a conscious pastiche of the manner of several famous operatic composers, among whom Mozart, particularly in his *Don Giovanni*, occupies pride of place.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The libretto, though distinguished by much beautiful poetic writing by Auden and Kallman, suffers from pasteboard characters and an inconsistency between the setting—18th-century England—and the authors' evident desire to incorporate elements of late 1940's existentialist philosophy. The resultant failure to integrate farcical and tragic elements is hardly unique in the history of opera; in this case, it is accompanied by a parallel unsureness in the music—a mixing of styles and an inability to write a musc strong and compelling enough to convince an audience that the characters and their situations deserve attention.

STRAVINSKY's immediately subsequent compositions, the *Cantata* (1951-52) and the *Septet* (1952-53), both demonstrate a new concern with contrapuntal complexity. The Septet is particularly important for the composer's use of tone rows—although he employs them tonally rather than atonally. This practice was continued in several following works, among them the *In Memoriam Dylan Thomas* (1954) and *Canticum sacrum* (1955). These compositions illustrate Stravinsky's continuing drift to the serialism of the second Viennese school associated with the names of Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern, to which he had been introduced by Robert Craft. They illustrate as well his growing preoccupation with the subject matter of funerary observance and religiosity.

The ballet *Agon* (1953-57), based on a 17th-century French description of dances from the courts of Louis XIII and Louis XIV, shows Stravinsky poised between serial and non-serial writing, while the work's connection with Stravinsky's neoclassical past may be seen not only in its echoes of old dance forms but also in the Greek title. With his next work, *Threni* (1958)—a setting of the Lamentations of Jeremiah—Stravinsky at last wrote a fully twelve-tone composition. Remarkable for the work of a man so old in years is the size of the canvas on which the music is written, and the concentration and organization lavished on it. After *Threni* came *Movements* (1958-59); along with the later orchestral *Variations* (1963-64), this music marked Stravinsky's closest approach to the work of Webern, which in particular he had discovered through the good offices of Craft.

It is significant that the sparseness of texture typical of Webern seems more noticeable in Stravinsky's orchestral works, rather than in those compositions where the presence of a text and of the human voice demanded a more emotional musical expression. And even in his most "advanced" works he does not venture very far into the hothouse chromaticism of the atonal music produced by Schoenberg and his followers. Instead, he stays well within his own brand of diatonicism—a kind of partiality stemming originally from the white keys of the piano, upon which he liked to compose, and which served him for his whole composing life.

The remaining memorials and works on religious subjects included tributes to Raoul Dufy, John F. Kennedy, and T. S. Eliot, as well as his last major compositions, the *Requiem Canticles* (1965-66). Two years earlier he had completed a cantata, *Abraham and Isaac* (1962-63), a setting of biblical texts in Hebrew and dedicated to the people of the state of Israel; this work seems scanty and perhaps flagging in vitality. But it is otherwise with the unjustly maligned *Flood* (1961-62), choreographed by Stravinsky's long-time friend, collaborator, and exponent, George Balanchine—an attempt to write a work conceived in terms of television, to unite music and dance for the age of electronic technology, much as Stravinsky and Diaghilev had done for the early modern era. The attempt failed, due to a not unsurprising combination of oversell, commercial exigencies, and the limitations of television both in production and in home reception. But the music remains beautiful and clearly one of Stravinsky's great achievements. The aural impression is one of harmonic richness and expansiveness, notwithstanding the work's serial construction; it is altogether a convincing refutation of the accusation of unfeelingness that is so often leveled at Stravinsky.

His last musical activities, like so much of what he did during his last half-century, involved the recomposition of the music of others. These tasks were understandably only a pale echo of his earlier reworkings of the past. Only ten years before, again as a result of Craft's influence, he had become interested in the eccentric 16th-century polyphonic composer Gesualdo; he recomposed three madrigals for instruments, and part of this music, strangely romantic in sound, has been used by the New York City Ballet. His final published work seems to be an orchestration of two Hugo Wolf songs, and close to the end he was somehow working on some pieces from Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*.

No discussion of Stravinsky as a musician would be complete without some mention of his activities as a performer. In addition to the piano career he so assiduously followed in the 1920's and 1930's, he became with increasing frequency a conductor of his own works, performing them across America and —after the arrival of Robert Craft (and thanks to the managerial energy and ingenuity of Lillian Libman)—the world over.

Through his exclusive recording contract with Columbia Records, he was able to compile a unique phonographic documentation of his preferred performance style. He himself expressed little but disdain for the tribe of star performers, reserving a special scorn for virtuoso conductors—whom in his books he accused of distorting and perverting his music in order to express themselves. His own conducting on records, if one bears in mind that in the last decade of his career much of the orchestral preparation was done by Craft, is straightforward, unsentimental, rhythmically alive without being either rigid or hasty.

IT IS remarkable how Stravinsky's *oeuvre*, over all of his long music-writing life and with all of its welter of styles, remains a coherent entity distinguishable from the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

work of others in character and aesthetic quality. His absolute mastery is never in doubt, and neither is his ability to write music at all times conceived in terms of a sophisticated audience whose reactions he shrewdly knows and basically respects. Yet one cannot always avoid the disturbing impression that only part of his overall musical character is defined by the virtues of clarity, elegance, and vitality; some other part of it may well lie in his daring use of so many other people's work, and his appropriation of that work with so little violence to its creators. Seen in this way, his final apparent commitment to serialism constitutes less a conversion than merely one more way in which Stravinsky could be himself.

Yet what this self was, what Stravinsky's aesthetic purposes and motives really were, remains unclear today. In the passage quoted above, Virgil Thomson suggests that Stravinsky appropriated the music of others as a rational and even courageous solution to the failure of his own originality to develop. But such an explanation would not appear to take adequately into account the immense role of others, running from Rimsky-Korsakov through Debussy and Diaghilev, in the genesis of just those works which Thomson sees as proof of Stravinsky's expanding powers in his earlier years.

Another theory often advanced to explain Stravinsky as an artist applies as well to the whole modernist enterprise; this theory downplays the revolutionary and radically transforming side of modernism in favor of a view which places at least equal emphasis on the traditional and conservative impulses within the movement. It has been well stated by George Steiner, in *After Babel* (1975):

> We know now that the modernist movement which dominated art, music, letters during the first half of the century was, at critical points, a strategy of conservation, of custodianship. Stravinsky's genius developed through phases of recapitulation. . . . In each instance the listener was meant to recognize the source, to grasp the intent of a transformation which left salient points of the original intact. . . . [Here as elsewhere] the apparent iconoclasts have turned out to be more or less anguished custodians racing through the museum of civilization, seeking order and sanctuary for its treasures, before closing time.

But this passage is more in the nature of a moving evaluation of our age than a real tribute to an immortal artist. Whatever the value of conservation in an age of dissolution, a high artistic price has to be paid by the conservators. That price, the penalty assessed for lack of originality, is the inevitable separation between an artist's self and the core of his art.

In the case of Stravinsky, this separation is expressed by the tendency of his music not to stick very well in one's mind. When one thinks of Stravinsky's compositions one sees yards and yards of excellent music, but that music is all too often attractive rather than memorable, a compilation rather than a creation, a musical individuality defined by its impersonality.

Not only Stravinsky, in our century, has modeled his music on the work of past masters. This trend is widespread among contemporary composers. But what makes Stravinsky special is the openness of his borrowing and the panache with which his actions have been defended. Other composers of less celebrated distinction, though they have borrowed from many—and not least from Stravinsky—have been rather more reticent and have given the impression of unconscious assimilation of a musical ethos rather than conscious appropriation. And it is unclear that this more muted process has been any the less effective in preserving the traditions of the past.

TO FIND the secret of Stravinsky's great career and influence, one must go beyond his musical achievement, to the enduring image he represents of the artist as a central figure in the cultural life of the age, as a unifier of the arts. This image is not one that he himself invented, of course. In music it originated perhaps in the fantastic career of Richard Wagner, who convinced all of cultured Europe that through opera he had made all the arts one. In his own way, Stravinsky (following Diaghilev's lead) accomplished a similar feat in ballet. And in later years he was to serve as a symbol of that unification by composing music to texts by such central modern writers as Gide and Auden, and by having his likeness made by Bonnard, Chagall, Giacometti, Klee, Modigliani, and Picasso.

Stravinsky's image as a central and unifying figure in the culture as a whole slipped somewhat with his return to religion at the end of the 1920's, and it suffered badly through his separation from European intellectual life in the early years of his American exile. But it was restored in the 1950's and especially in the 1960's by the efforts of Robert Craft. Craft's achievmeent was simultaneously to bring Stravinsky up to date with the cultural and social world of the Kennedy years and to proclaim the continued vigor and artistic growth of a man in his eighties. By his intellectual and musical services to Stravinsky he kept him alive in both public and personal terms.

In one of the several Stravinsky "interviews" dealing with his illnesses, a passage returning to the consideration of music is headed by the epigraph, *"Neue Kraft fühlend"* (feeling new strength), taken from the illness-inspired slow movement of Beethoven's Quartet opus 132; the pun seems fully justified. Craft has been belabored for having created a false Stravinsky, but perhaps he should be credited with a work of fulfillment. By his literary efforts in the books cosigned by him, and by his activities as social quartermaster for Stravinsky the celebrity, Craft brought to completion in Stravinsky that which his music alone is unable to supply—the total personality which does, in fact, stick in one's mind. Yet the final achievement will always be seen as Stravinsky's. For if, in his dependence upon others, Igor Stravinsky was a puppet, he was that rare puppet who chooses his own masters.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOTE

THE following books bear Igor Stravinsky's name either as author or as co-author:

Igor Stravinsky, *An Autobiography,* Simon & Schuster, 1936; Norton (paperback), 1962.
_____, *Poetics of Music,* Harvard University Press, 1947; Vintage (paperback) 1956.
Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky,* Doubleday, 1959.
_____, *Memories and Commentaries,* Doubleday, 1960.
_____, *Expositions and Developments,* Doubleday, 1962.
_____, *Dialogues and a Diary,* Doubleday, 1963.
_____, *Themes and Episodes,* Knopf, 1966.
_____, *Retrospectives and Conclusions,* Knopf, 1969.

Robert Craft's diaries of his association with Stravinsky are available in: Robert Craft, *Stravinsky: Chronicle of a Friendship 1948/1971,* Knopf, 1972 ; Vintage (paperback), 1973.

Lillian Libman's book about Stravinsky is *And Music at the Close: Stravinsky's Last Years,* Norton, 1972.

At the present time, the most complete discussion of Stravinsky's compositions is contained in Eric Walter White's *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works,* University of California Press, 1966.

THE many recordings which feature Stravinsky as conductor—or rarely as pianist—in his own music are fully listed by David Hamilton in *Perspectives on Schoenberg and Stravinsky,* edited by Benjamin Boretz and Edward T. Cone (Norton, 1972). The older recordings, which date from as long ago as 1927, are in general unavailable today. The following performances, however, represent Stravinsky's final traversals on discs of each work; in some cases they are his only recordings of the compositions in question. With many exceptions, listed below, these recordings remain in print (some of them on special order) on Columbia Records.

ML 4964	*Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (deleted).
AMS 6022	*Agon; Canticum Sacrum.*
AMS 6065	*Threni.*
MS 6272	*Movements; Octet;* others.
AKS 6318	*Monumentum pro Gesualdo.*
MS 6327	*The Nightingale* (deleted).
MS 6331	*Concerto for Violin.*
MS 6357	*The Flood* (partially conducted by Craft, deleted).
MS 6372	*The Wedding* (deleted).
MS 6919	*Persephone* (deleted).
MS 6947	*Concerto for Piano and Wind Orchestra* (deleted).
MS 6989	Symphony in E-flat.
MS 6991	*Mavra* (deleted).
MS 6992	*Cantata; Mass; In Memorium Dylan Thomas.*
MS 7054	*Septet; Elegy for J.F.K.;* others.
MS 7094	*Scherzo Fantastique; Fireworks;* others.
MS 7386	*Introitus;* the performances of the *Orchestra Variations, Abraham and Isaac,* and the *Requiem Canticles* are conducted by Craft.
MS 7439	Songs.
M 30516	*Four Norwegian Moods; Concerto in D; Danses Concertantes* (conducted by Craft).
M 30579	Music for chamber and jazz ensembles.
M 31124	Choral Music.
M 31129	*Oedipus Rex.* (An earlier performance of this work, with Jean Cocteau as narrator, is also available on Odyssey Y 33789.)
M 31729	"Favorite Short Pieces."
M 31921	*Jeu de Cartes; Scènes de Ballet.*
M3S 710	*The Rake's Progress.*
D3S 761	*The Fairy's Kiss; Orpheus.*
D5S 775	*Petrushka* (ballet suite); *Firebird* (ballet suite); *Rite of Spring; Pulcinella; Symphony of Psalms; Symphony in C; Symphony in Three Movements; Apollo Musagetes; L'Histoire du Soldat* (suite).

In addition, a recording of Stravinsky as pianist, in performances from the early 1930's, is available on Seraphim 60183; it includes the *Capriccio,* the *Piano Rag Music,* the *Serenade in A,* as well as the *Duo Concertant* for piano and violin.

A recording of Stravinsky in rehearsal and conversation, interesting for its display of the composer's personal charm and vitality as well as for the limitations of his English, is supposedly included in the album listed above, D5S 775. I have, however, not been able to find it so included in copies of that album currently on sale. I wish to thank Columbia Records and the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives at Lincoln Center for making a copy available for my use.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books in Review

A Liberal Critique

TWO CHEERS FOR CAPITALISM. By IRVING KRISTOL. *Basic Books. 274 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by MICHAEL NOVAK

IRVING KRISTOL is often called a "neoconservative," but what he attempts in *Two Cheers for Capitalism* is a liberal critique of both corporate capitalism and socialism.

Of the thirty-one essays gathered in this book, the first appeared in 1970 and the last in 1977, twenty-five of them in the *Wall Street Journal,* four in the *Public Interest* (of which Mr. Kristol is co-editor). They lack the unity of cumulative logic or of autobiographical chronology. Still, one does well to read them in order, for they do display a coherent and distinctive intellectual position as it has been formulated in the light of day-to-day public concerns.

The essays are grouped in three sections. In the first, Mr. Kristol devotes seven chapters to the ideology of the "New Class," that large body of intellectuals, lawyers, members of universities, technocrats, and media personnel whose livelihoods increasingly batten on the public sector and who consequently have an interest in defending and expanding that sector. In these essays, Mr. Kristol's task is that of classical social thought: to unmask, to make manifest what was before only latent. Thus he demonstrates not only that such a class now exercises power, but that it is more properly understood as socialist than as liberal.

Mr. Kristol's second brace of essays, fourteen in number, criticizes "the large corporations" which "every day, in every way . . . look more and more like a species of dinosaur on its lumbering way to extinction." Mr. Kristol shows how modern corporations now exceed the limits (if ever their predecessors stayed within them) of merely "economic" institutions. So large are they, so many people do they affect, and so broad a range of human life do they impinge upon, he argues, that they must now be regarded as "political" organisms. The new corporate world includes not only business corporations but parallel bureaucracies in the media, the churches, education, and other fields. This new world is as different from the small entrepreneurships known to the Founding Fathers as "Imperial America" is from the fledgling Republic of 1789. How to think about this new world—to see it plain, to analyze it, to direct it—is the task to which he summons liberal intellect.

Liberal intellect, not socialist intellect. Mr. Kristol does not see much gain in bringing the vast "quasi-public" corporations of modern life wholly into the public sphere, as socialists would do. That way lies state monopoly. Nor does he see much gain in the "old-liberal" view that these institutions should be, or even can be, broken up. What would really be accomplished, he asks, by fragmenting IBM or General Motors into three or four separate units? Neither the internal dynamics of those corporations nor the shape of our system would thereby be altered.

Mr. Kristol's argument against the socialist and old-liberal critics of corporate capitalism seem not only to the point but unanswerable. (Critics of *Two Cheers for Capitalism,* in the New York *Times Book Review,* the *New York Review of Books,* and elsewhere, have barely ventured serious argument.) Mr. Kristol limits his own recommendations, however, to very modest steps indeed. He would like the "stupid party" of conservatives to cease being stupid and to cease resisting the welfare state. It is neither bad politics nor bad economics, he argues, to introduce effective compassion into a social order, so that the elderly may live in decency, elementary needs for housing and food and education can be met, a minimum income is provided to all, and the dignity of a job is open to everyone. But are there not, he asks, liberal rather than socialist techniques for accomplishing these goals? To the incredible promise of all-good-things-through-the-state, are there not alternatives? Mr. Kristol, setting himself steadfastly against a libertarianism of the Right—against the simple notion of "private vices, public benefits"—tries instead to incite defenders of capitalism to begin thinking politically, and one by one to identify constituencies that they might better serve than the statists do: the elderly, workers, shareholders, etc.

In these middle chapters, Mr. Kristol operates without an intellectual tradition to fall back upon. There is no body of "democratic-capitalist" thought on which to draw, no theory worked out in advance for guiding a welfare state down liberal paths. As most writings in the socialist tradition are merely statist, so most writings in the capitalist tradition are merely economic. They do not dwell on the broad problems of polity and culture by which a whole healthy society lives. They have been parasitic on a bourgeois-religious culture, now perishing from intellectual and institutional neglect. Once one concludes that socialism offers no cure for the ailments of corporate capitalism, where can one turn? Mr. Kristol, at least, has begun to frame modest answers.

But, so far, he is better at unmasking and analyzing than at prescribing. For example, two issues much discussed in recent writings —as in Charles E. Lindblom's *Politics and Markets*—receive less attention from Mr. Kristol than they might. Socialist critics argue that corporate capitalism (1) controls its own markets, without permitting a truly free market; and (2) has disproportionate control over the democratic political process. Mr. Kristol does not address such

MICHAEL NOVAK *is Ledden Watson Distinguished Professor of Religion at Syracuse University. His books include* The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics *and* Belief and Unbelief.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

charges head-on. Tangentially, however, one can discern from his essays the general lines his response might take. Thus, on the issue of the relative freedom of the free market, he might point out that whatever the limitations on the openness of individual markets, there is demonstrably a greater degree of freedom when two or more producers—with different strengths, purposes, and specialties—compete, and when there is freedom for private sources of initiative to incorporate themselves at will, than when a state monopoly directs all transactions. As for the question of disproportionate control over politics, Mr. Kristol would turn the tables: it is the New Class, in his view, that wields disproportionate power over the electorate—by its virtual monopoly of the instruments of culture and communication.

IN THE third section of his book, Mr. Kristol moves to deeper questions. Here again he illustrates quite clearly how his thought is breaking out of the cocoon of an earlier version of liberalism. These last nine essays are philosophical and conceptual. The classical liberal faith is anchored in science and technology; in reason as opposed to tradition, custom, and religious faith; and in the millenarian spirit embodied in such typical fantasies as "a world without war," "a world without poverty," and "a world without hate." Such a faith is, to Mr. Kristol's mind, sadly deficient in realism; it badly misjudges the conditions of human life. Mr. Kristol has thus come to share—almost, it seems, despite himself—at least part of the traditional religious critique of the modernizing spirit.

It is in this sense, perhaps, that Mr. Kristol may be accurately called a "conservative"—although it should immediately be added that avowed socialists like Robert Heilbroner, many environmentalists, and some on the New Left have also recently adopted elements of the classical conservative critique of liberalism. Where Mr. Kristol differs both from classical conservatism and from the romantic Left is in the high value he

ECONOMICS

Capital Accumulation and Income Distribution

Donald J. Harris. The aim of this work is twofold: to provide a systematic interpretation and critical assessment of the main contemporary lines of approach to a theory of accumulation and income distribution in the capitalist economy, and to develop an analytic reconstruction of some of the problems and issues that arise in such a theory. 1978. $15.00

Income Distribution Policy in Developing Countries

A CASE STUDY OF KOREA. *Irma Adelman & Sherman Robinson.* The authors develop a dynamic computable general equilibrium model (rooted in the Korean economy) that provides a laboratory for investigating the potential impact of various policy instruments and programs intended to improve the relative and absolute incomes of the poor. 1978. $12.50

French Economic Growth

J.-J. Carré, P. Dubois & E. Malinvaud. "A landmark in the quantitative analysis of the French economy."—*Canadian Journal of Economics.* "This broad perception of the boundaries of economics makes for refreshing and thought-provoking reading, leaving sufficient room for disagreement and questioning."—*Journal of Economic Literature.* 1975. $22.50

The Politics of Oil in Venezuela

Franklin Tugwell. "A thorough, well-researched, and well-written case study. . . . Provides a good deal of insight into the working of the post-1958 political process."—*Latin American Research Review.* "An excellent study. . . . Broad implications for any country seeking to control multinational corporations."—*Political Science Quarterly.* 1975. $8.95

China's Modern Economy in Historical Perspective

Edited by Dwight H. Perkins. "One of the most important works to appear in Chinese economic studies."—*Journal of the American Oriental Society.* "An important collection . . . rich with hypotheses and statistical evidence."—*Journal of Asian Studies.* "Fresh and provocative . . . deserves wide and thorough discussion."—*Far Eastern Economist.* 1975. $13.85

Japanese Economic Growth

TREND ACCELERATION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. *Kazushi Ohkawa & Henry Rosovsky.* "A grand and panoramic study. . . . Destined to remain a major work for years to come."—*The Asian Student.* "The definitive work on Japanese economic growth."—*The Annals.* "A landmark."—*The Developing Economies.* "An unmistakably important work."—*The Journal of Asian Studies.* 1973. $15.00

STANFORD

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

places on bourgeois, individualistic, Calvinist civilization: a civilization of non-utopian, modest, mundane, disciplined, tolerant, unheroic expectations. His is, in a way, a secular vision not altogether unlike that of Albert Camus in *The Rebel,* who against the fierce and murderous idealism of Sartre and his fellow "makers of history" appealed to a classical moderation, an ancient stoicism toward which Mr. Kristol also casts many sidelong glances. Mr. Kristol recognizes better than Camus that stoicism is an aristocratic way of life; indeed, the reason he so highly honors bourgeois civilization is that it at least briefly created an ethos in which stoicism was in effect democratized.

There are several excellent chapters in part three—I like particularly the essays on utopianism, on equality, and on taxes—and most have either one of two strengths: sharply decisive factual materials or arresting conceptual clarifications. Still, Mr. Kristol has not yet explored all the territory he has here caught a glimpse of. It is quite astonishing, for example, how often he appeals to the need, personal and public, for genuine religion, only to draw back discreetly from elaboration. On this, his own incipient theory requires him to say far more.

Again, it is mischievous of Mr. Kristol to accept, as he does, the designation of himself as a "neoconservative," except in a religious-moral sense. He is no intellectual companion of most economic or political conservatives, and if his primary polemic is against those who insist upon calling themselves leftists, it is not because they are too liberal—he finds them quite illiberal on every basic point—but because they are committed in effect to state authoritarianism.

Still, this book is a collection, and it is wrong to expect from it a fully worked-out theory. The point is that Mr. Kristol is saying something heretical and truly avant-garde—no doubt, these are precisely the qualities in his thought that infuriate his critics on the Left—and anyone who cares for the intellectual and spiritual health of the liberal tradition is now obliged to pay him close attention.

Cost/Benefit

ABORTION IN AMERICA. By JAMES C. MOHR. *Oxford. 331 pp. $12.50.*
THE AMBIVALENCE OF ABORTION. By LINDA BIRD FRANCKE. *Random House. 261 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by PETER SKERRY

JAMES C. MOHR'S *Abortion in America* is a scholarly history of the origins of the 19th-century anti-abortion laws that were more or less in force until 1973, when they were overturned by the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion (*Roe* v. *Wade*). The book fills a void in American social and political history, bringing together some fascinating data that have been awaiting just such a general historical treatment.

Mohr reveals that there was a startling increase in abortion rates in 19th-century America—from about one in every thirty live births around 1800 to about one in every five by 1870, a figure which is not far behind our own present rate. From an act of last resort for the unmarried at the beginning of the 19th century, abortion had become by mid-century a common practice among middle- and upper-class married women. It was in response to these developments that an anti-abortion crusade was launched that by 1880 completely outlawed abortion in the United States.

According to Mohr, almost the entire responsibility for the enactment of the new anti-abortion laws lay with the elite of the nation's fledgling medical profession. Their efforts were motivated in part by conditions then prevailing in the field of medicine. Mohr points out that throughout the first half of the 19th century there was no dominant professional mode of medical practice, and regular physicians, trained in science at established medical schools, had to compete for patients with a variety of lay healers, folk doctors, and outright quacks, all of whom willingly performed abortions. Abortion, then, was simply one of numerous medical practices that bona-fide medical practitioners sought to regulate out of existence in order to eliminate the competition and enforce a single standard of practice.

To be sure, Mohr mentions other motives behind what he calls "the physicians' crusade against abortion." To oppose abortion at any point during a pregnancy was after all in accordance with the Hippocratic oath, to which the physicians alone among their competitors subscribed. As men of science, moreover, their knowledge of conception and gestation would have led them to reject the prevailing view that before "quickening" the fetus was inert matter, somehow not fully human. Even more than clergymen, 19th-century physicians "defended the value of human life *per se* as an absolute," which is why the laws they pushed through state legislatures in the 1860's and 1870's typically protected the fetus as well as the mother against the crime of abortion.

Nevertheless, although Mohr does mention all these principled motives behind the physicians' opposition to abortion, in the end he dismisses them in favor of his argument from self-interest. He summarizes that argument as follows:

> The two chief pressures that produced the anti-abortion laws in the first place [were] the short-term interests of regular physicians in the face of an unprecedented crisis in the history of medical practice in the United States and the shift in the socio-demographic role of abortion in America. . . .

Mohr is not alone in this view. Indeed, playing down or ignoring the principled basis of 19th-century anti-abortion laws has by now become a convention. Justice Blackmun, for example, writing in *Roe* v. *Wade,* relied heavily on the argument that the sole intent of the anti-abortion laws of the 19th century was not the protection of the fetus, but the protection of the health and safety of the mother from a dangerous procedure. Even a century ago, in other words, abortion was an issue not of morality but of practicality and/or self-interest. Why then—this is the unspoken question that lurks behind

---

PETER SKERRY, *a new contributor, works with the Mediating Structures Project of the American Enterprise Institute.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

such an analysis—should it be treated as a moral issue today?

Yet this reasoning is not supported by the evidence. As Mohr himself concedes, there was more to the anti-abortion crusade of the 19th century than a concern for professional advancement on the part of physicians. Although he provides no convincing evidence with which to evaluate the relative importance of the different motives he examines, Mohr chooses to emphasize those that suit his purpose, and in doing so he ignores the richness and complexity of his own findings.

The anti-abortion laws of the 19th century, in Mohr's view, represented an "attempt to impose criminal proscription as the national norm." But if doctors were truly *imposing* their self-interested views on a society increasingly reliant on abortion, why did they meet with so little resistance? And why were the laws so effective? Were people simply duped by the articulate and well-organized physicians? Mohr deals with these questions by avoiding them. "The precise process whereby those changes took place in the popular mind," he writes, "is much too intricate to be explained here. . . ." He simply refuses to consider the possibility that anti-abortion laws addressed a collective conscience that acknowledged, however reluctantly, the moral troublesomeness of abortion.

A SIMILAR inability to deal forthrightly with popular disapproval of abortion pervades *The Ambivalence of Abortion* by Linda Bird Francke, a journalist and former editor at *Newsweek*. Based on interviews with women (and their husbands and lovers) who have opted for abortion, this book might more accurately have been called *The Ambivalence of Having an Abortion*. It is important to remember that Mrs. Francke's sample is biased. She interviews no one who has decided *against* having an abortion, and, significantly, she never mentions that a majority of Americans still oppose abortion on demand.

Even so, Mrs. Francke uncovers considerable shame and guilt about abortion. Talking to people around the country who, for the most part, have had abortions since the 1973 decision, she finds significant regional variation in attitudes. Women undergoing abortions at clinics in the Midwest and the South, for example, are known by their first names only, or by number; as one counselor in an Ohio clinic put it: "No one I've ever seen here wants anyone else to find out who they are." In Atlanta, the director of a clinic admits: "Abortion is not accepted here. We're still working on it." Mrs. Francke reports honestly on the difficulty clinics around the country have in retaining women doctors (who tend to become revolted by the work) and on the negative effects upon doctors who do nothing but perform abortions all the time.

Mrs. Francke found no one whose relationship with her partner had not been seriously affected by the abortion. She reports that "almost every relationship between single people broke up either before or after the abortion" and describes a generalized mutual lack of interest in sex after abortion. Among married couples she found severe stress and, in a few cases, permanent damage to the marriage as a result of the wife's undergoing an abortion.

But like Mohr, Mrs. Francke too seems unwilling to face up to the implications of her own findings. After describing in some detail the

"It takes a special kind of intellectual nerve to contemplate steadily both the calamities and continuities of Jewish history. This Robert Alter has."

—*Dan Jacobson, New York Times Book Review*

"Defenses of the Imagination is an exceptional work of criticism . . . a close, clear and precise reading of about a dozen 20th-century Jewish writers. Alter sees Jewish writers as representing in symptomatic (if extreme) form the predicaments of the 20th-century literature as a whole . . . brilliant . . . convincing. He is particularly concerned to show how the Holocaust and the destruction of the Jewish communities of Europe are confronted imaginatively in modern Jewish literature . . . a first-rate critic."

—*Larry McMurtry, The Washington Post*

"Defenses of the Imagination is a book bustling with ideas."

—*Daphne Merkin, The New Leader*

"A broad, tolerant, learned book."

—*The Kirkus Reviews*

"Alter is one of the most interesting and trenchant literary critics writing today."

—*Publishers Weekly*

Defenses of the Imagination

Jewish Writers and Modern Historical Crisis/***Robert Alter***

$8.50 at bookstores or from

Jewish Publication Society

117 South 17th Street

Philadelphia Pa. 19103

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

torment and anguish of men whose partners have had abortions, she concludes without the slightest qualification that "regardless of whether [a woman] chooses to continue her pregnancy or to terminate it through abortion, it is her decision alone." For Mrs. Francke, indeed, this appears to be the essence of the abortion issue. For some of the women she interviews, abortion is "just solving a problem"; for others, it is more difficult —"the best thing rather than the right thing." But in either case, as far as Mrs. Francke is concerned, the decision to have an abortion is *only* a personal one—a "life-style choice," as she approvingly quotes an official of Planned Parenthood. She seems incapable of granting that the issue has any public, social ramifications whatsoever. Commenting on the passionate responses to an op-ed article she published in the New York *Times* (and which became the basis of her book), she writes:

> The varied responses to my abortion article do not surprise me at all. They are all right. And they are all wrong. There is no issue so fundamental as the giving of life, or the cessation of it. These decisions are the most personal one can ever make and each person facing them reacts in her own way.

This casual reduction of such a "fundamental issue" as "the cessation of life" to the dimensions of a mere personal dilemma is the distinguishing mark of Mrs. Francke's approach to her subject. *The Ambivalence of Abortion* does make an effort to inform women more fully about the consequences of their decisions, and to tell one truth about abortion that is seldom heard—that it is psychologically and physically traumatic. Yet what the book offers in the end is little more than a refined cost-benefit analysis.

In *Abortion in America*, James C. Mohr asks us to believe that American society came to abhor abortion as the result of the machinations of a small group of ambitious professionals. It was the abiding residue of their efforts, he concludes, that was finally swept away in 1973—and not any public witness against the taking of life. Mrs. Francke, too, applauds the Supreme Court decision, despite her apprehensions over some of its effects, and reaffirms the idea that abortion is nothing more than a matter of personal choice. Both books sedulously refrain from even raising the question of abortion as an issue of public morality, and both thus contribute to the atmosphere of bad faith in which this tormenting subject continues to be discussed.

Big Money

THE GUGGENHEIMS: AN AMERICAN EPIC. By JOHN H. DAVIS. *Morrow. 608 pp. $14.95.*

Reviewed by A. J. SHERMAN

MONEY, really big money, is perhaps our last emotional frontier: most people are shameless voyeurs where the very rich are concerned, insatiably curious as to how they got their money, how they spent it, and what having it did to them along the way. The fabulous fortunes amassed in that antediluvian time before income tax exert a special fascination; and if we add to the excitements of conspicuous wealth *per se* the powerful mythic elements in a classic tale of immigrant upward mobility, we have such stuff as dreams—at least American dreams—are made on.

A serious study of the Guggenheims in all their exuberant variety could satisfy our craving for exemplary myths while telling us much about the members of the family as individuals and about the changing American society in which they spectacularly made and spent their fortunes; such a book would moreover be entertaining as few contemporary novels are. Unfortunately, John H. Davis has instead chosen to write mawkish soap opera, and a significant opportunity has thereby been lost. It is difficult, after reading *The Guggenheims*, to imagine that responsible members of the family will soon again care to receive, let alone cooperate with, a writer purporting to deal with their history.

What a remarkable history it nevertheless remains. The Guggenheim family originated in the little village of Lengnau in Canton Aargau, Switzerland, where they had lived for over 150 years, experiencing all the restrictions, indignities, and pressures that weighed on those few privileged Jews permitted to dwell within the Swiss Confederation. Simon Meyer Guggenheim, a middle-aged widower, ultimately decided to emigrate to America, along with the children of his first marriage and a widow with children of her own, Rachel Weil Meyer, whom he intended to marry. Arriving in Philadelphia in 1848, Simon Meyer and his sons began, as did so many immigrants, by peddling household goods from door to door.

Of the numerous Guggenheim children, Meyer (1828-1905) emerged as the most able and hard-working, full of entrepreneurial zeal and an almost unerring instinct for the main chance that eventually propelled him and his children to extraordinary affluence and power. Starting out as a dealer in dry goods and stove polish, he went on during the Civil War to successful speculation in foodstuffs and clothing, then to a wholesale spice business, a lye manufacturing concern, investment in railroad shares, and in the 1870's a prosperous business importing European laces and embroideries. By 1879, Meyer's various enterprises had enabled him to accumulate a capital of nearly a million dollars. But the quantum leap into truly vast wealth came only after a modest speculation in a Colorado mine evolved into a bonanza beyond the dreams of avarice. From mining Meyer Guggenheim and his sons went on to smelting and refining, steadily consolidating their empire, ruthlessly breaking strikes and overcoming competitors, natural disasters, and upheavals in world commodity markets. By 1889, the family had moved to New York, a vast step upward in terms of wealth and social aspirations.

It was Daniel Guggenheim (1856-1930) of the next generation whose outstanding diplomatic gifts and tenacity enabled the family to ac-

A. J. SHERMAN, *formerly an investment banker, is now executive director of a foundation in New York.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

quire enormously profitable mining and smelting concessions in Mexico. By 1900, the Guggenheims and their allies had done battle with the formidable Rockefeller-owned American Smelting and Refining Company and emerged as majority shareholders in the enterprise which dominated the mining and smelting of metals throughout America. At Meyer's death in 1905, his seven sons controlled assets in excess of $75 million, and then went on to gobble up enterprises in Alaska, the Congo, Angola, Bolivia, and—most spectacular of all—the richest copper mine in the world, the Chuquicamata deposit in Chile. Upon the outbreak of World War I, the Guggenheims were lords of some 75 to 80 per cent of the entire world production of copper, silver, and lead, all vital to the Allied war effort. And their wealth continued to accumulate at a dizzying rate.

The first defection in the close-knit family came in 1901 when two of Meyer's seven sons, William and Benjamin, dropped out of active partnership in the family ventures, with much subsequent acrimony and litigation. With the sale of Chuquicamata in 1923 to Anaconda Copper, at a profit of some $160 million, Harry and Edmond of the next generation also resigned from Guggenheim Brothers. The family was never again reunited in a single business firm, and indeed the later ventures of individual Guggenheims in Chilean nitrates and other chemicals turned out to be less than successful.

It was in the decade of the 1920's that the family, by then possessors of 250 or so millions, and living in enormous Renaissance and Jacobean palaces on the North Shore of Long Island, began to pour money into large-scale philanthropy, each trying to outdo the other in beneficence as in ostentatious living. There followed a stream of gifts to foundations, laboratories, universities, museums, and hospitals: the Daniel Guggenheim Fund for the Promotion of Aeronautics sponsored the pioneering research that ultimately paved the way for the United States space program; the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and its fellowship program financed several generations of scholars, writers, and artists; other Guggenheim gifts endowed the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and other modern art collections in New York, Venice, and Denver, funded free dental clinics for poor children, as well as hospitals, archeological expeditions, and a host of other cultural and charitable activities.

Along with this record of positive achievement, there was also much conspicuous waste, sheer silliness, and a darker side, too: feuding, frequent divorces, alcoholism, madness, several suicides. The fifth and sixth Guggenheim generations are now widely scattered; the remaining family enterprises—still very substantial, though a mere fraction of a once-vast empire—are managed by Peter O. Lawson-Johnston, grandson of Solomon R. Guggenheim. The California branch prospers in real estate and brokerage, living in well-guarded compounds, and swimming off yachts which by their grandfathers' standards would be called modest. Several generations of "daughtering out" have resulted in attenuation of the name itself. One young scion of the present generation, William Guggenheim III, does have two sons who will carry on the name, but he lives in Florida in virtual isolation from the rest of the family and devotes his time to "small-scale spiritual works" which he hopes will lead to formation of a "New Age spiritual community." He, his wife, and their enchanting two-year-old son, William Douglas Guggenheim, smile at us engagingly from the final photographs in the book.

THE long trajectory of the Guggenheims in America raises fascinating questions. One wants to know a great deal more about their origins and early business dealings; the inside story of the corporate and dynastic struggles that marked their rise to power and wealth; their so-

Hubert Humphrey

Sheldon D. Engelmayer & Robert J. Wagman

The Man and His Dream 1911-1978

Introduction by Senator Muriel Humphrey

In this, the first book on The Happy Warrior since his death early this year, two award-winning Washington journalists have constructed a warm and perceptive overview of the life and career of America's most beloved politician. Between the chronologically arranged speeches from the time he was mayor of Minneapolis to the time of his death are woven a series of connective bridges which point up the unflagging consistency and innovative quality of Humphrey's thirty years in Washington. (Did you know he "invented" the Peace Corps and Medicare?) The authors get to the heart of the man through his own words, and in the process, they have discovered a politician unlike any other in the United States.

Epilogue by Vice President Walter F. Mondale

Eulogy by President Jimmy Carter

$12.95 hardcover, from your bookseller or Methuen

777 Third Avenue, New York 10017

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cial ambitions and how they were fulfilled; the reasons for the abrupt loss of élan that was reflected in business reverses and even the "daughtering out" that has so dramatically thinned the ranks of contemporary Guggenheims. Answering such questions would require a substantial work, and a knowledge of American business and social history that is conspicuously lacking in this book.

Mr. Davis has substituted gossip for analysis, reduced business complexities to headlines, and indulged throughout in a breathless Hollywood columnist's prose that dwells lovingly on descriptions of yachts, houses, dinner parties, backstairs sexual relationships, and the checkered life and loves of Peggy Guggenheim, the most flamboyant of the Guggenheim descendants. Occasionally the author pauses in his catalogue of jet-set doings to remind us piously that the Guggenheim fortune was built on the sweat of countless ill-paid miners, whose strikes were put down with ferocity. In the end, however, philanthropy somehow redeems past sins; a century after their arrival in America, the Guggenheims "accomplish the miracle of alchemizing gems and metals into art."

THE shortcomings of this book are most obvious when Mr. Davis discusses the Guggenheims as Jews. He correctly sees their ascent as a conspicuous example of that outpouring of creative energy in the post-Emancipation era that brought Jews into the mainstream of Western culture; but instead of examining the pressures and attractions that have led almost the entire family to renounce their Jewish origins, he takes it for granted that the Jewish renaissance necessarily also meant emancipation from the "closed, tribal, ritualistic religious and intellectual tradition of Judaism with its essentially backward gaze." In this context, it is not reassuring to read Mr. Davis's absurd contention that "prior to the 19th century the Jews had produced almost no one of extraordinary intellectual and artistic distinction, save for the philosopher Benedict Spinoza, since the birth of Jesus of Nazareth."

The line from Meyer Guggenheim, with his "long rabbinical whiskers," whose "love of money bordered on the pathological," to Daniel Guggenheim, with his "veritable mania for profits, an unswerving devotion to the great god of Earnings per Share, the Almighty Figure Below the Bottom Line" leads on to Colonel M. Robert Guggenheim, a disastrous Ambassador to Portugal, whose ambition was "to be fully and unconditionally accepted into the Gentile upper class." Peggy Guggenheim's cry of disgust, written after a trip to Jerusalem in 1930, offers us a partial clue to family attitudes: "It mortified me to belong to my people. The nauseating sight of my compatriots publicly groaning and moaning [at the Western Wall] . . . was more than I could bear, and I was glad to leave the Jews again." Such a disturbing expression of self-loathing would seem to demand comment from any serious biographer. But Mr. Davis—perhaps wisely sensing himself out of his depth—offers none. Instead, he returns with relief to descriptions of the "rounds and rounds of 'fantastic Bohemian parties' which Peggy's stuffy mother did not approve of at all."

One of Peter Lawson-Johnston's young daughters is quoted as saying: "O.K., we're one-quarter Jewish, but we're proud of it, because that's where all the money comes from." Even Mr. Davis seems somewhat uneasy with this, although he ventures for his own part that "Jewish *chutzpah*" may be the missing ingredient required to inject new energy into the family enterprises. Yet his final word is more suggestive than he perhaps is aware. Summing up more than a century of often tumultuous Guggenheim activity, he writes, "not only had the family realized the American Dream a hundredfold, it had even succeeded in liberating itself from its often inconvenient Jewishness. What was there to be, what was there to dream, where was there to go, now?" Some speculation as to possible answers might have told us a good deal about the Guggenheims—and about certain varieties of the Jewish experience in America as well.

GDR

INSIDE EAST GERMANY: THE STATE THAT CAME IN FROM THE COLD. By JONATHAN STEELE. *Urizen Books. 256 pp. $12.95.*

Reviewed by MELVIN CROAN

EAST GERMANY long constituted a veritable *terra incognita* to all but a tiny handful of Western specialists. For approximately two decades after its establishment on the territory of the Soviet zone of military occupation in 1949, the German Democratic Republic was a diplomatic outcast, Europe's one and only pariah state. But thanks to the détente diplomacy of the early 70's, East Germany's earlier status has now been largely overcome. The unstable Soviet satellite has given way to something more substantial, if still insecure.

Even today, however, journalistic coverage of the GDR is at best sporadic in the United States, and scholarly studies are few and far between. Worse still, some published works are analytically unsophisticated or politically naive, or both. Given the state of the literature, as well as East Germany's crucial geopolitical importance to both East and West, this new book invites the closest attention. In it, Jonathan Steele, a well-informed foreign correspondent for the Manchester *Guardian*, argues that it is misleading to treat East Germany as merely a carbon copy of the Soviet system; indeed, he insists that, for better or worse, "its overall social and economic system is a presentable model of the kind of authoritarian welfare states which Eastern European nations have now become." As Steele sees it, "socialism in the GDR is as much a part of the socialist tradition as any of its other national manifestations elsewhere in the world."

The first six chapters of Steele's book are given over to an inter-

MELVIN CROAN, *a new contributor, is professor of political science and chairman of the Russian area studies program at the University of Wisconsin.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pretive summary of the East German regime from its pre-history in the split between the Communists and the Social Democrats more than a half-century ago through the "economic miracle" experienced by the GDR in the years following the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961. The next three chapters survey the human condition in the socioeconomic setting created by East Germany's industrially advanced "authoritarian welfare state."

Steele concludes with a discussion of "the self-image of a new Germany," appending a brief epilogue of generously measured tribute to Walter Ulbricht. Steele considers the GDR's late top political boss to have been "the most successful German statesman since Bismarck" and (if you please) "above all a German nationalist"—this, notwithstanding Ulbricht's Comintern activities and his contribution to Germany's present national division.

Such curious judgments aside, it should be said that the historical chapters of Steele's study are basically sound. He has made good use of memoirs and drawn upon most of the limited number of secondary scholarly accounts in order to describe East Germany's problematic origins and precarious early years. In a series of vignettes, he illuminates the social role of such novel institutions as the factory-conflict commissions and the "collectives of socialist labor." He also touches upon the cross-currents affecting East German youth, the uses of leisure, the handling of crime, and the churches' more or less "critical solidarity" with the regime.

As Steele points out, East German life is characterized by a number of apparent contradictions and curiosities. There is, to begin with, the political elite's unshakable monopoly on planning, which comes into conflict with its genuine desire for popular participation. Then there is the reputed "collectivist consciousness" of the East German population, which exists side by side with a remarkable spread of "privatization" through all sectors of society. Yet another

All America wants Levine!

"Absorbing"

"Levine is the most absorbing character to come out of popular political fiction since Frank Skeffington of *The Last Hurrah*."—Russell Baker

"Lively, very hep

political novel...Audacious in its concept and intelligent in its development...spiced with racy humor and sophisticated dialogue."—*John Barkham Reviews*

"Intelligent and witty,

and the satire of campaign gamesmanship is incisive."
—*Publishers Weekly*

"Sparkling...

THE WANTING OF LEVINE shows a fine Dickensian flair for juggling all sorts of themes and social commentaries and side-bar adventures at the same time...First-rate."
—Robert Sherrill, *New York Times Book Review*

"The best

political novel since *All the King's Men*. It's also one of the most purely enjoyable books of any kind to come my way in years."—Jane Clapperton, *Cosmopolitan*

The Wanting of Levine

Michael Halberstam

co-author of A Coronary Event

$10.00

Lippincott
J.B. Lippincott Company

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

striking contradiction obtains between the extraordinary resilience of the East German family, extended as well as nuclear, and the exceptionally high rates of divorce and suicide. Finally, in a chapter entitled "Social Services from Cradle to Grave," Steele draws attention to the poignant fact that in East Germany it is far better to be young than old. In terms of the distribution of the state's elaborate social services, things go downhill from infancy. If old-age pensioners alone enjoy the unrestricted right to travel to the West, that is because the state would gladly see them stay there and thus rid itself of the financial drain entailed in their support.

ALL brief surveys suffer from regrettable omissions. This is certainly the case with respect to Steele's discussion of East Germany's attitude toward the Jews. Although he may well be correct in noting that East Germany "has been much more careful in drawing the line between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism than elsewhere in Eastern Europe," he fails to mention the foreign-policy commitments undertaken by the regime in the name of anti-Zionism. And while Steele is right to note the state's generosity to the "few pathetic survivors" of the Holocaust (now numbering about a thousand souls), in the form of the reconstruction of synagogues and the repair of cemeteries, he has nothing at all to say about the regime's refusal to grant restitution to Jewish survivors who reside outside the GDR.

These omissions are symptomatic of a more basic failing of Steele's presentation, namely, his almost complete neglect of the inextricable relationship between international politics and internal East German affairs. By his account, the Helsinki agreement ought never to have emboldened the East German population to demand permission to emigrate; but it did. Similarly, critical departures from Soviet orthodoxy on the part of Eurocommunists in the West should not be nurturing dissidence within the GDR's ruling party; but they do. And if, as Steele persuasively argues, East Germany has produced its own distinctive version of national Communism, that alone should raise the question of the relationship between it and the other German state. Yet to this overwhelmingly crucial matter, Steele pays insufficient attention.

Indeed, Steele seems to assume that ever since the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961, East German-West German relations have steadily declined in importance. He explicitly postulates that as the result of the treaties between the two German states in the early 70's, "the two nations' [*sic*] political relationship is likely to be more placid over the next decade than ever before." Nothing could be further from the truth—as may be seen in the recent outbreak of political warfare over the publication in the West German weekly, *Der Spiegel*, of a manifesto by an ostensible "League of Democratic Communists" within the East German party.

IN FACT, the GDR's leaders remain at a loss as to how best to handle expanded and intensified contacts with West Germany. Even Honecker, demonstrably more flexible, pragmatic, and relaxed than Ulbricht, shares many of his predecessor's ingrained cold-war reflexes.

Is this, as Steele appears to believe, only a manifestation of "excessive caution, and lack of confidence in a population which often seems more loyal than the leadership expects"? Or could it be a consequence of Honecker's own quest for popular legitimation by satisfying the consumer wants of the East Germans? The "consumerism" course has resulted in heightened dependence on various forms of West German economic support. To guard against the potentially disruptive domestic inroads that flow from this, the regime has felt obliged to step up its unpopular campaign of ideological and political *Abgrenzung* ("delimitation") against the West. To the extent that it does so and will continue to do so, East Germany is still far from being "the state that came in from the cold."

Jews & Socialism

WHILE MESSIAH TARRIED: JEWISH SOCIALIST MOVEMENTS, 1871-1917. By NORA LEVIN. *Schocken. 554 pp. $24.50.*

Reviewed by BERNARD K. JOHNPOLL

EAST European Jews and their descendants have historically been quite susceptible to the blandishments of socialism. In the socialist movement Jews could feel themselves members of a "universal" humanity rather than a small and frequently despised people; through socialism, they believed they could escape the disabilities imposed by their particular ethnic and religious origins. Even after the protective cover of socialism had proved illusory—something that happened early on—many Jews were reluctant to abandon it. Instead, they attempted to change it to meet their own needs.

By the end of the 19th century there was a proliferation of parties and groups within the Jewish socialist community, all holding to the basic tenets of socialism but differing on the Jewish question. The Jewish-socialist Bund, for example, agreed with Otto Bauer and Karl Renner that the answer to the nationality problem in a socialist society should be national cultural autonomy within the host country; the Poalei Zion saw the end of persecution only in a return to the ancestral Jewish homeland where socialism could be built and ethnic freedom enhanced; the "territorialists" favored a Jewish-socialist homeland, with or without historical ties; a fourth group of Jewish socialists favored total assimilation into the majority group—the disappearance of the Jewish people and of Judaism in a socialist commonwealth devoid of nationalism in any form.

Nora Levin's book is primarily historical in its emphasis, discussing in great detail the various movements that waxed and waned during the forty-six years between

BERNARD K. JOHNPOLL *is professor of political science at the State University of New York at Albany.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the first stirrings of Jewish socialism in 1871 and Lenin's *coup d'état* in 1917. She does a workmanlike job of describing the complicated network of interrelationships and often bitter rivalries that characterized the Jewish-socialist world during this period. Although there is no scarcity of studies of Jewish socialism, most are limited to specific parties and tendencies; Professor Levin's work is useful in providing an overall look at the subject and a synthesis of previous scholarship in the field.

Unfortunately, however, there are two major questions to which Professor Levin has failed to address herself: Why did so many East European Jewish intellectuals become socialists? And in what way did they come to modify their basic ideas of socialism and Jewishness?

Some non-Jewish scholars have addressed themselves to the first of these questions, with minimal success. Harry W. Laidler, for example, has argued that socialism is implicit in the Jewish prophetic tradition, especially in the teachings of Amos. But this would hardly explain the socialist upsurge in the Pale of Settlement during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a period during which atheism and the rejection of biblical teachings were the very foundation stones of Jewish socialism.

It has similarly been argued, following Jean-Paul Sartre, that since Jews were excluded from society, they would naturally ally themselves with the chief antagonists of the social order. This argument, too, is seriously flawed, for the prime antagonist of society at that time was not social democracy, which claimed the largest Jewish adherence, but rather Anarcho-Communism, which numbered relatively few Jews among its supporters.

THE Jewish attachment to socialism becomes even harder to understand in view of the anti-Semitism which has historically permeated this movement. The pre-Marxian "utopian" socialists like Fourier, Brisbane, and Proudhon despised Jews no less than did their "scientific" socialist successors, and did not hesitate to disseminate classical, stereotyped anti-Semitic slanders. Karl Marx himself, the inventor of scientific socialism and a descendant of eminent rabbis, was the author of an anti-Semitic diatribe worthy of an Alfred Rosenberg or a Houston Stewart Chamberlain.

In the American socialist movement, too, hatred of Jews was endemic. Julius Wayland, whose *Appeal to Reason* was the leading molder of socialist opinion from 1900 to 1917, blamed virtually all of the sufferings of American workers and farmers on "Jew bankers," and August Spies, who died on the gallows for the 1886 Haymarket bombings, wrote anti-Semitic articles in which he blamed Polish Jews for the poverty and degradation of American coal miners. As late as 1932, anti-Semitism played a significant role in the attempt to unseat Morris Hillquit as the American Socialist party's national chairman. Even those socialists who were not overtly antagonistic toward Jews refused to express their opposition to anti-Semitism openly for fear that workers would be alienated and the socialist vote might decline.

MANY of the Jewish socialists, moreover, knew about the anti-Semitism in the movement's ranks, and did nothing about it. Abraham Cahan, the editor of the Yiddish socialist *Forward*, was a delegate to the 1891 congress of the Socialist International at which Paul Agyriades of the French left-wing *Parti ouvrier socialiste revolutionaire* delivered himself of a tirade against philo-Semitism and persuaded his fellow socialists to remain silent in the face of Czarist outrages. For more than thirty-five years thereafter Cahan declined so much as to mention this tirade or the International's failure to speak out. Nor was Cahan's silence unique. Almost all of the socialist intellectuals had read Marx's *Zur Judenfrage* and the letters in which he characterized his opponents as "nigger Jews." Many of these intellectuals were Jews, yet their silence on the subject was deafening. And despite Marx's overt anti-Semitism, his portrait continued to decorate

Virginia Woolf

Historical T-Shirts, etc.

Virginia Woolf, Joyce, Tolkien, Hemingway, Dickens, Proust, George Sand, Colette, Jane Austen, Poe, Dickinson, Thoreau, Nabokov, Anais Nin, Melville, Twain, G.B. Shaw, Brecht, Kafka, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Agatha Christie, Einstein, Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Vivaldi, Handel, Brahms, Chopin, Wagner, Mahler, Ives, Wittgenstein, Nietzsche, Jung, Freud, Wilhelm Reich, Darwin, Mao, Marx, Russell, Plato, Earhart, Escoffier, Frank L. Wright, Van Gogh, Rembrandt, Nijinsky, Tutankhamun.

T-Shirts: white $6.50ea., 4/$22. red or blue: $8.ea., 4/$28.
Sweatshirts (gray): $12ea., 2/$21. All shirts cotton.
Sizes sm(34-36) med(38-40) lg(42-44) xlg(46-48)
Totes(nat. canvas): $9.50ea., 2/$18
Cook's Apron (white cotton): $8.ea., 2/$14.
Prices ppd. CANADIAN customers add $1.00 per piece.
HISTORICAL PRODUCTS Box 220S Cambridge, MA 02138

"HOW BEST to celebrate the anniversary of the overthrow of the Lon Nol regime in Cambodia? For the present rulers of that festive land, that question is easily answered. You round up the 350 families in the area surrounding the village in which Lon Nol was born and slaughter them, and then post their names at anniversary rally."

For a free copy of the current issue of National Review, write to Dept. C-8, 150 East 35th Street, New York, New York 10016.

THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF ANTI-SEMITISM

PAUL E. GROSSER *and* EDWIN G. HALPERIN

An unbelievable catalogue of unbelievable activity against the Jewish people from 70 A.D. to 1970.

Rev. Edward H. Flannery (former executive, Secretariat for Catholic Jewish Relations of Nat'l Conference of Catholic Bishops) says: "....the first thing we must do .... is get all the facts .... This your book has done perhaps better than any other one."

At random from the book:

1391 A.D.
A Christian mob attacked the Jewish community of Barcelona; over 300 were killed or committed suicide; 11,000 were forcibly baptized.....

Over 400 pages; only $12.50. At your bookstore, or order from: Philosophical Library, 15 East 40 Street, NYC 10016

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bund, Hashomer Hatsair, Workmen's Circle, and Farband meeting halls and schools.

Jews lent their considerable intellectual and organizational talents to socialist movements in both Europe and the United States and helped them achieve some modicum of political and intellectual respectability. In Czarist Russia, the Bund gave the Social Democratic Workers party its only mass-based section—the non-Jewish segment of the party was minuscule. In the United States, Morris Hillquit, a Latvian Jew, and Louis Boudin, a Russian-born Jew, gave the Socialist party whatever intellectual base it could claim. Victor Berger, an East European Jew born in Galicia (though he was thought by all to be a German), was the Socialist party's only effective political organizer. And of the three most consistent socialist districts in the United States, two were Jewish—Brooklyn's Brownsville and the Lower East Side of Manhattan.

It was not only that many Jews *became* socialists; they also remained loyal to socialism long after their non-Jewish fellow believers had turned away. Even after the Communist International hailed the Arab pogroms in Palestine in 1929, large numbers of Jews remained loyal to that illegitimate offspring of the socialist movement.

WHY? It would seem that no serious work purporting to be a study of Jewish socialist movements can avoid the questions of why so many Jews frequently went against their own national self-interest in order to work for the "emancipation" of an antagonistic mankind. But Professor Levin scarcely confronts this question. Though she does acknowledge socialist anti-Semitism, she fails in more than 500 pages to come to grips with the problem. This failure may be due in part to the author's own credulity about socialism. She accepts at face value all the myths that have surrounded socialism, and never questions the assumptions that socialists were animated by totally altruistic motives. Nowhere does she examine the psychological probability that Jewish socialists may have been as desirous of escaping from the disabilities inherent in being a Jew, or of achieving personal power, as they were of achieving universal salvation.

Nor does Professor Levin fully examine the actual achievements of the East European Jewish socialists. Admittedly some of them were instrumental in forming major labor organizations in the United States, but the halcyon days of these unions came *after* their leaders had abandoned the myth of socialism. Admittedly too, the socialist Zionists were instrumental in creating today's Israel, but they too achieved that feat only after they had recognized that the national impulse was more important than the universalist ideology which they had proclaimed. The Israel which the Poalei Zion helped develop has little to do with the socialism preached by Ber Borochov or his intellectual heirs.

PROFESSOR LEVIN has also made a few errors of fact and emphasis, more annoying than significant, perhaps, but symptomatic of the book's failings. She calls Abraham Cahan a labor leader, which he never was; she denigrates the role of non-Jewish socialists in the Jewish labor movement; she misinterprets the American socialist debate on immigration between 1907 and 1912; she devotes more than twenty pages to Borochov, whose actual influence on the Zionist movement was more apparent than real, and makes only passing reference to Berl Katznelson, whose influence on Labor Zionism from 1909 to 1944 was immense. Most important, she makes too frequent use of secondary sources that are at times little more than fictional works passing as history. For her discussion of American socialism, for example, Professor Levin cites Ira Kipnis's *The American Socialist Movement, 1897-1912*, the least substantial of the histories of the party, and the same is true of a good number of her other sources. A more extensive use of primary materials might have led the author to ask the pertinent questions which could have made this a major work. As it is, the book is creditable but seriously flawed.

The End of the Road

FINAL ENTRIES 1945: THE DIARIES OF JOSEPH GOEBBELS. Translated by RICHARD BARRY. Edited and with an introduction by HUGH TREVOR-ROPER. *Putnam. 368 pp. $14.95.*

Reviewed by DAN JACOBSON

NOT even the publishers of *Final Entries 1945* claim that the diaries which Joseph Goebbels kept during the last two months of his life, and which have belatedly been made available by the East German government, contain new historical facts of any importance. How could they? By the time these entries begin, the Nazis were in effect defeated; nothing that Adolf Hitler's Minister of Propaganda could say—and little enough that his master could do—would make much difference to what was happening outside the German capital, or even inside it. The Russian and Anglo-American armies would continue to advance; German troops would continue to retreat or to surrender in large numbers; the entire edifice of the Third Reich, and all its systems of command and information, would continue to disintegrate rapidly. The sole interest of the diaries, therefore, lies precisely in their revelation of what a man like Goebbels tells himself at such a time: when he sees slipping away from him, minute by minute, the power which he and his fellow-gangsters had enjoyed almost unchecked for more than a decade.

That the diaries are unspeakably depressing to read goes without saying. Given the nature of the regime Goebbels had both served and helped to inspire, it could not be otherwise. What may come as more of a surprise, however, is their *childishness*. This does not make one feel any better about them. On the contrary.

Consider the situation. The war which had devastated Europe was

DAN JACOBSON *is the author of several novels, including* The Beginners, The Rape of Tamar, The Wonder-Worker, *and* The Confessions of Josef Baisz, *which will be brought out by Harper & Row in the fall.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

drawing to its end. Horror upon horror was being uncovered by the Allied armies, as each concentration camp and death factory was overrun. Large parts of Germany itself were in ruins. These were the achievements of the regime of which this man had been the chief agitator and spokesman. Now the hour of—no, not retribution, for no retribution was possible, or even imaginable—but the hour of defeat had arrived. Nevertheless, until about two weeks before his suicide he went on dictating to his secretaries, as he had done for years, a daily record both of the position on the various war fronts, as transmitted to him by the military command, and of his own reactions to these developments, as man, minister, Gauleiter of Berlin, and confidant of the Fuehrer. Of what do these reactions speak? Remorse? None. Self-analysis? None. Political retrospection? None. Impotent rage, irrelevant and inexhaustible blaming of others, fantasies of revenge, expressions of slavish adoration toward the father-figure of his leader, boasts about his own mythical achievements in stemming the crisis, detailed plans for a future which could not under any conceivable circumstances be realized—of these, and of combinations of these, no end.

Let me give some examples. The Allied armies, as I have said, are astride Germany and are advancing steadily, and the Allied air forces have total mastery of the German skies. But—"The workers' strikes now flaring up both in England and the USA, however, are more important." "The situation in the enemy-occupied regions is becoming increasingly menacing. Here is a great opportunity for us." "Our sole great hope at present lies in the U-boat war. Our Western enemies are very worried abut it." "On the enemy side, time presses as never before." "The political crisis in the enemy camp is growing to considerable magnitude." Over and over again, it is true, the writer will admit that none of these factors seems in itself sufficient to change the fundamental drift of events; but one soon realizes that there is something curious about these admissions. They are not made in order genuinely to qualify or to question the assertions they accompany; rather, they are demonstrations by Goebbels to himself that he is in fact being realistic, he is not merely indulging in daydreams. In other words, they are there to reinforce the fantasy, not to destroy it. "I am convinced that this political crisis [among the Allies] could quickly be made to flare up, if it was not continually being pushed into the background by the enemy's military victories."

Who is to blame for these enemy victories? According to the diaries, one man chiefly: Hermann Goering. The general staff are cowards, the mayors and Gauleiters of the devastated German cities are not showing the resolution that could be expected of them, Himmler lacks "the divine spark," there are looters and deserters everywhere. But what has brought these moral failings to the surface is above all else the bombing of the German cities; and for that Goering is responsible. If only he could be shown the door, the position might soon be restored. "Bemedalled idiots and vain perfumed coxcombs have no place in our war leadership." "I rage inwardly when I think that despite all the good reasons and arguments, it is not possible to persuade the Fuehrer to make a change here." "It is simply ridiculous to show any sympathy now for a man who has brought the Reich into such mortal crisis." "All those present at the fire [after an air raid] voiced only scorn and hatred for Goering. . . . I beg the Fuehrer yet again to take action, because things cannot go on like this."

That is as near as he ever comes to criticism of his Fuehrer. For the rest, Hitler's wisdom, strength, and moral and intellectual capacities are beyond all questioning. Full of a habitual, self-vaunting callousness and cruelty though these diaries are, they speak of Hitler in tones of fainting, sentimental veneration. "The Fuehrer gives me a very stalwart impression once more. . . . His steadfastness is admirable. If anyone can master this crisis, he can. Throughout the length and breadth of the land there is no one who can hold a candle to him."

NOVELS

by J. Inchardi

$10 each.

Lines On The Death Of A Fisherman

Three Jews In A Tub

Dreamship

Yurros

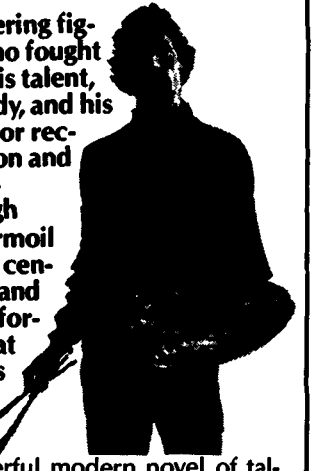
A Paper Toy

Intercurse

Order by mail from
Sirius Books, Box 177
Freeport, Maine 04032

THE ARTIST

by Norman Garbo



A towering figure who fought with his talent, his body, and his mind for recognition and truth—through the turmoil of this century—and never forgot that he was a Jew.

"A powerful modern novel of talent and sex and love and adventure and violence and hate and pity.... Nothing written about such a book can convey its worth. A great painting must be seen and a splendid book must be read."

—MARTIN PANZER, *The Jewish Post*

$10.95 at all bookstores

Norton

W.W. NORTON & COMPANY, INC.
500 Fifth Avenue, New York 10036

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But no single quotation or group of quotations can convey the tone of soggy, dog-like worship which informs the pages upon pages of the diary devoted to accounts of his face-to-face meetings with Hitler, or the unction with which he reports Hitler's compliments to him, or the sycophantic glee with which he describes his renewed closeness to Hitler, brought about by the crisis. "The Fuehrer no longer holds back anything from me." "The Fuehrer had high praise for the simplicity and purity of my family life."

IN ANY event, the Fuehrer's praise can always be supplemented by his own praise for himself. "I set out yet again in a calm, totally assured and lofty vein the arguments capable of giving the German people hope of victory." Sometimes he will go even farther, and impute to his audiences, without any supporting evidence, the praise he feels they must be giving to him. The effect of this can be unconsciously comic, on occasion. "The broadcast makes an extraordinarily strong impression, for it radiates a strong fighting spirit." "I give these men [some troops just behind the front-line] watchwords for the present situation, reinforcing them with a series of historical examples which carry much conviction, particularly in this area. One can imagine the effect of such a speech on an assembly such as this."

As for the Jews: "Anyone in a position to do so should kill off these Jews like rats. In Germany, thank God, we have already done a fairly complete job." Other groups, large and small, German and non-German, are unfortunately out of his reach; but he promises himself that their turn will come. Or rather, that his turn will come again. Then they will be made to suffer. In the meantime, he tries to bring that day nearer by magical curses and incantations—some of the kind quoted a few paragraphs above, others more specific in nature. Thus on March 6, 1945 he reports: "There is definite fear of the Rhine [among the Allied commanders]. The British and Americans naturally realize that in the middle of Germany they cannot carry out an amphibious operation like that of last summer. There are far too many obstacles for that." Two days later: "This evening alarming news comes . . . that the Americans have succeeded in forming a small bridgehead on the right-hand bank of the Rhine. I cannot confirm the accuracy of this information, since communications to the west are not working. I regard it as more or less out of the question however." So much for that. "The reports both of Dr. Ley and Speer are extremely alarming. I assume, however, that they are much influenced by what they have seen in the west and cannot look at these matters from the necessary distance. . . . I refuse to be deterred by reports of so-called eyewitnesses." So much for them.

ONE could go on and on, accumulating such grotesqueries and absurdities. But enough. The psychological processes at work are sufficiently plain and familiar; childish they indeed are. But if that word is to be given the force it should have, there are two important points to be added here. Inevitably both are cheerless. First: among the variety of psychic mechanisms which enabled Goebbels to keep going until the very end, the one which was *not* childish in any way was his impregnable, even crazed, moral self-righteousness. Roosevelt, declares Hitler's propagandist-in-chief, is "megalomaniac" and "reckless"; Churchill "rides roughshod over all criticism"; the allies are full of "victory hysteria" and "victory psychosis," and need (again and again) "to be sobered up"; the foreign workers in Germany "will undoubtedly be our best propagandists after the war"; the behavior of the Allies, who show no respect for Germany's cultural monuments, "literally brings blushes to the cheeks"; the world as a whole is a place "of contradiction, mendacity, and hypocrisy inconceivable in one's wildest dreams." This kind of self-exaltation, this capacity for seeing oneself as the very embodiment of precious moral and cultural values, is quite beyond the reach of any child. For that you need to have had the experience of a protracted literary and religious education, years of embittered failure and struggle, a hate-filled ideology that eventually brings you success, the support of a dictatorial party and state, the hysterical adulation of mass meetings and of hired or terrorized media, the admiration and caresses of kept women, the applause of flunkeys and foreign potentates.

The second point is that to speak of a political leader as "childish" is not in the least to say anything dismissive about him. Far from it. Unimpeded and unashamed access to the crudest emotions and mental processes of early childhood of the kind which Goebbels evidently had, can in fact be a source of immeasurable strength in public life. Hence his power as a propagandist in compelling the world to conform to his own fantasies; hence the tenacity with which he could cling to those fantasies when the world had at last grown recalcitrant. If it be objected that these diaries show him *in extremis,* or virtually so, and that they can therefore offer no guide to his "real" self, I can only reply that they seem to me perfectly continuous with what was revealed in the earlier diaries (1942-43), published about thirty years ago, or the extracts from his execrable, post-adolescent novel, *Michael,* which appear in the biography by Roger Manvell and Heinrich Fraenkel. Of course there are differences too. The circumstances were different. But the man remains the same; so does the deformed, vindictive child within him; and so does the relationship between the two.

It is entirely appropriate that he should have taken his own life, once Hitler was dead. That he should have taken with him his wife and six children is also fitting.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In The Bahamas you can live like Robinson Crusoe.

Or the way he dreamed of living.

The endless islands with endless possibilities.

Some people dream of relaxing on a secluded island.

Others dream of more lavish surroundings.

In The Bahamas you can have either. Or both.

Create your own world at a quiet hideaway with miles of untouched beaches.

Or stay at an exciting resort where we'll pamper you in tropical style.

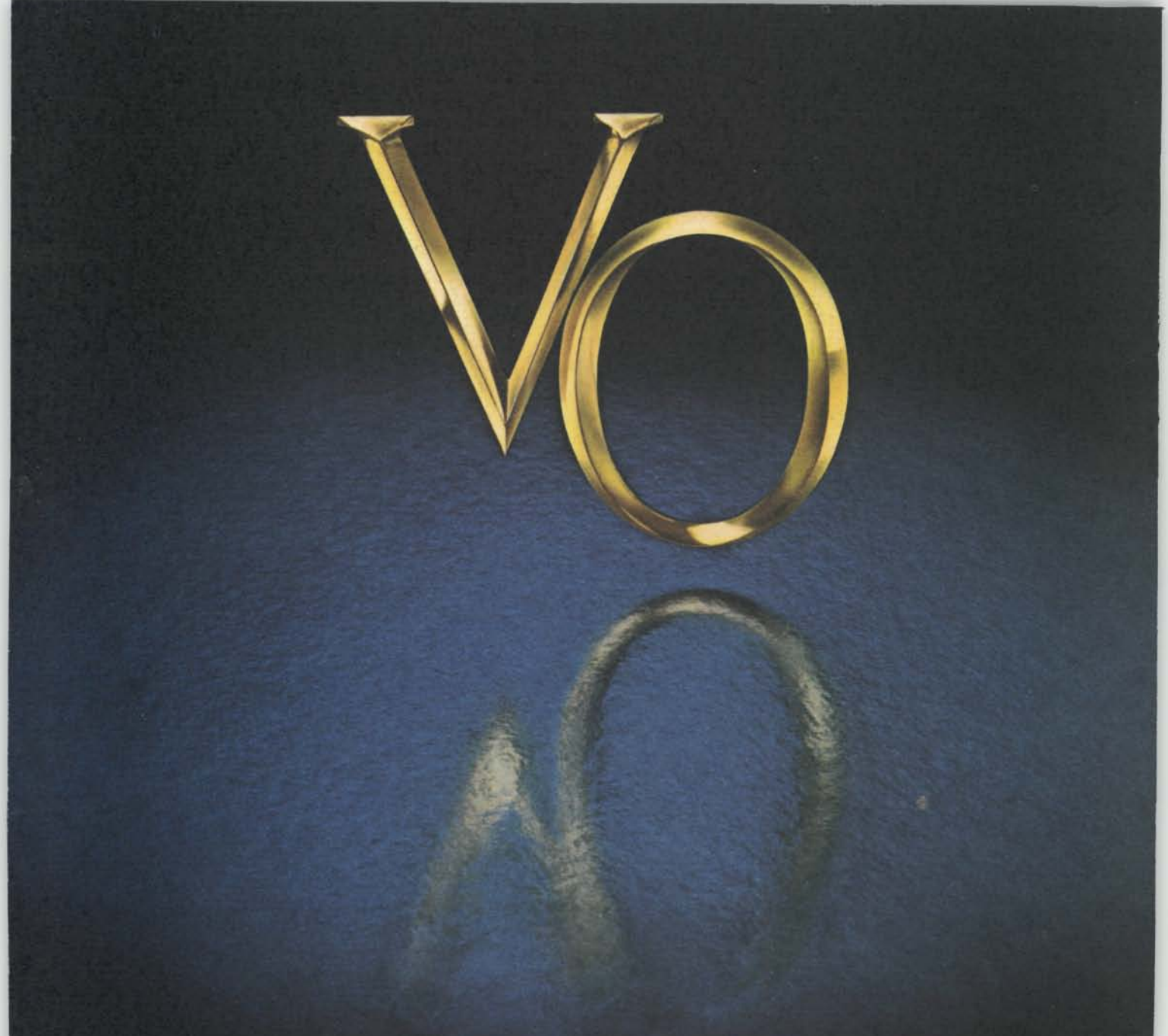
You see, with us you have a choice. To be alone on one of our endless islands, pampered by nature. Or be with others, pampered by us.

For reservations and information, call your travel agent or 800-327-0787. In Florida 800-432-5594.

It's Better In The Bahamas

BaHamas

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



What a man serves is often a reflection of the man.

Seagram's V.O.

Bottled in Canada. Preferred throughout the world.

CANADIAN WHISKY. A BLEND OF CANADA'S FINEST WHISKIES. 6 YEARS OLD. 86.8 PROOF. SEAGRAM DISTILLERS CO., N.Y.C.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED